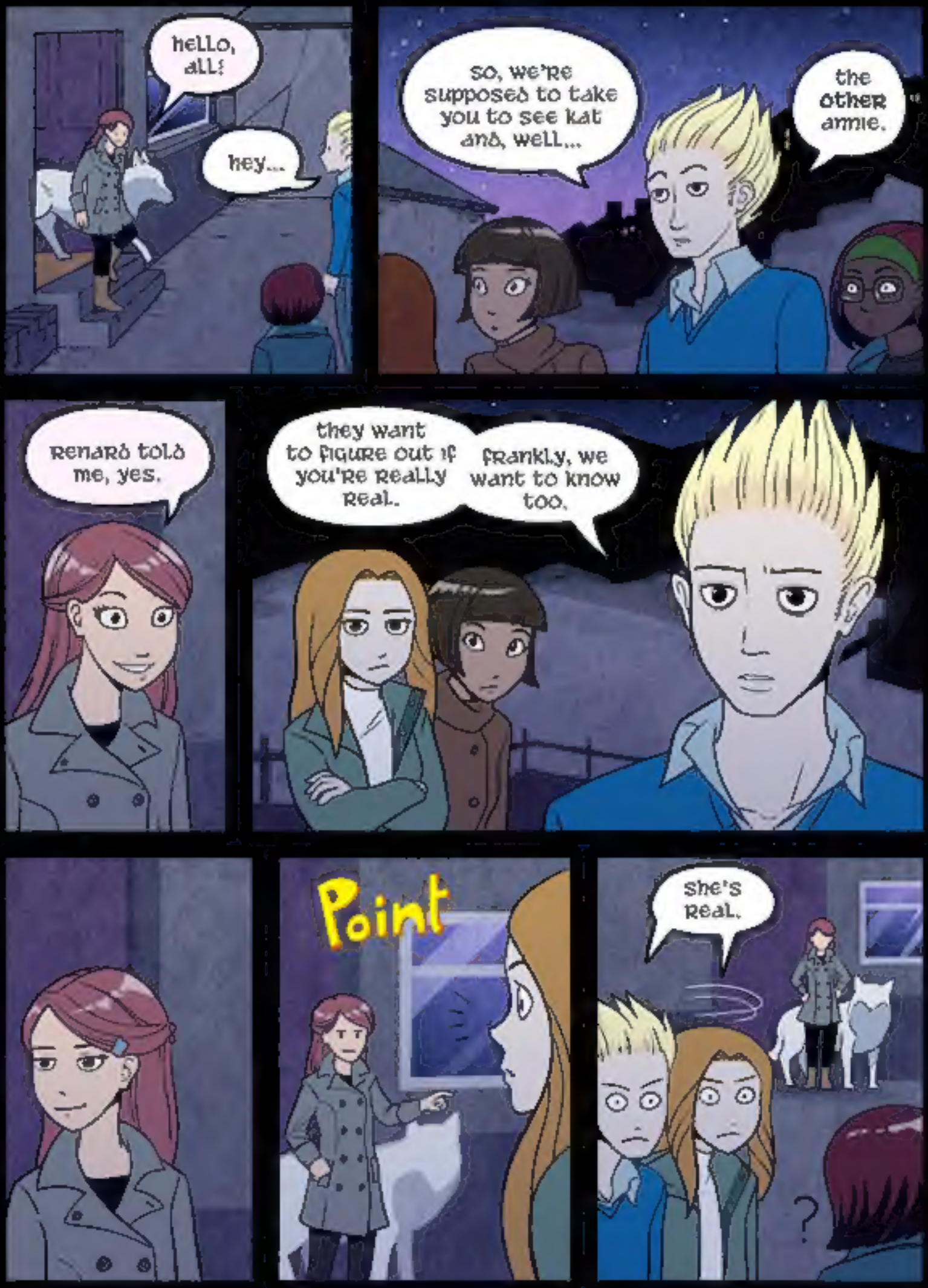
Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 70:

Dealing With HER

psst, hey.
Renard?

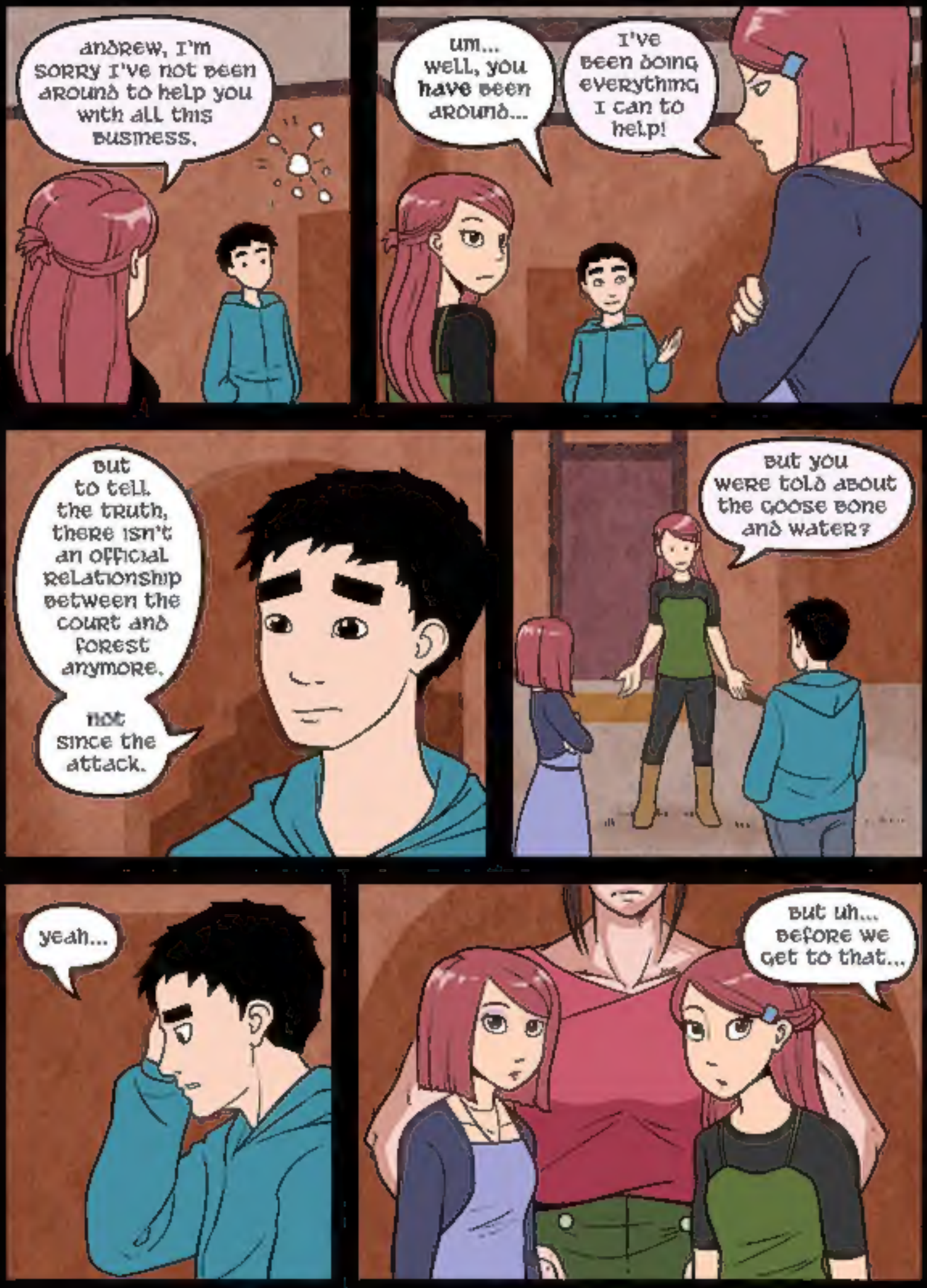
sorry to wake you...
some of your friends are outside.
they wanted to stage a false kidnapping but they thought that might be a little distressing for you.
oh... really?
well, that, and they thought you might set them on fire.
haha!
I'll get dressed.

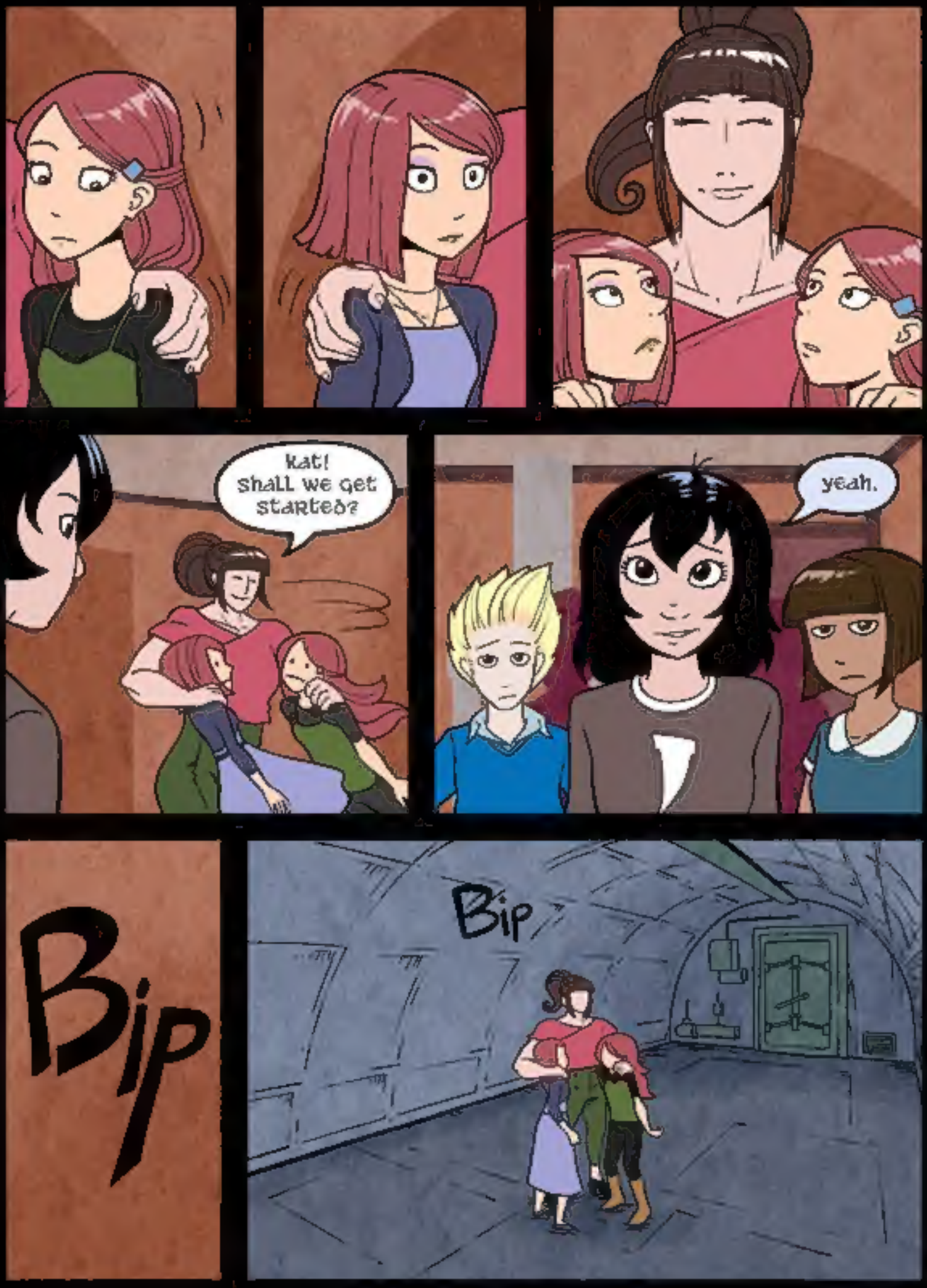

hello, all!
hey...
so, we're supposed to take you to see kat and, well...
the other annie.
renard told me, yes.
they want to figure out if you're really real.
frankly, we want to know too.
Point
she's real.
?

curfew patrol.
paz?

annie...
kat tries very hard for you.
she worries a lot about all this.
so, whatever you are...
Grippp
you will
not
do anything to make her upset.
oh! now's our chance to go!
...

jeez! what have you gotten yourself into?
parley! andrew!
hey!
I should have gone into the forest with you...
I think loup would have just kicked you out as well.
either that or there would be two of you now...


Andrew, I'm sorry I've not been around to help you with all this business.
um... well, you have been around...
I've been doing everything I can to help!
but to tell the truth, there isn't an official relationship between the court and forest anymore.
not since the attack.
But you were told about the goose bone and water?
yeah...
But uh... before we get to that...


kat! shall we get started?
yeah.
Bip
Bip

okay ladies, here's the deal
this is an underground bunker, concrete and steel.
CLANG
it's been closed off, so I'm your only way in or out!
you two have one hour to sort out your problems.
kat didn't tell me about this!
that's right!
bye!
Bip

...
Is it wise to be underground?
considering Loup's trees?
pft.
We're far from any red or yellow zones.
Kat would never arrange anything to put me in danger

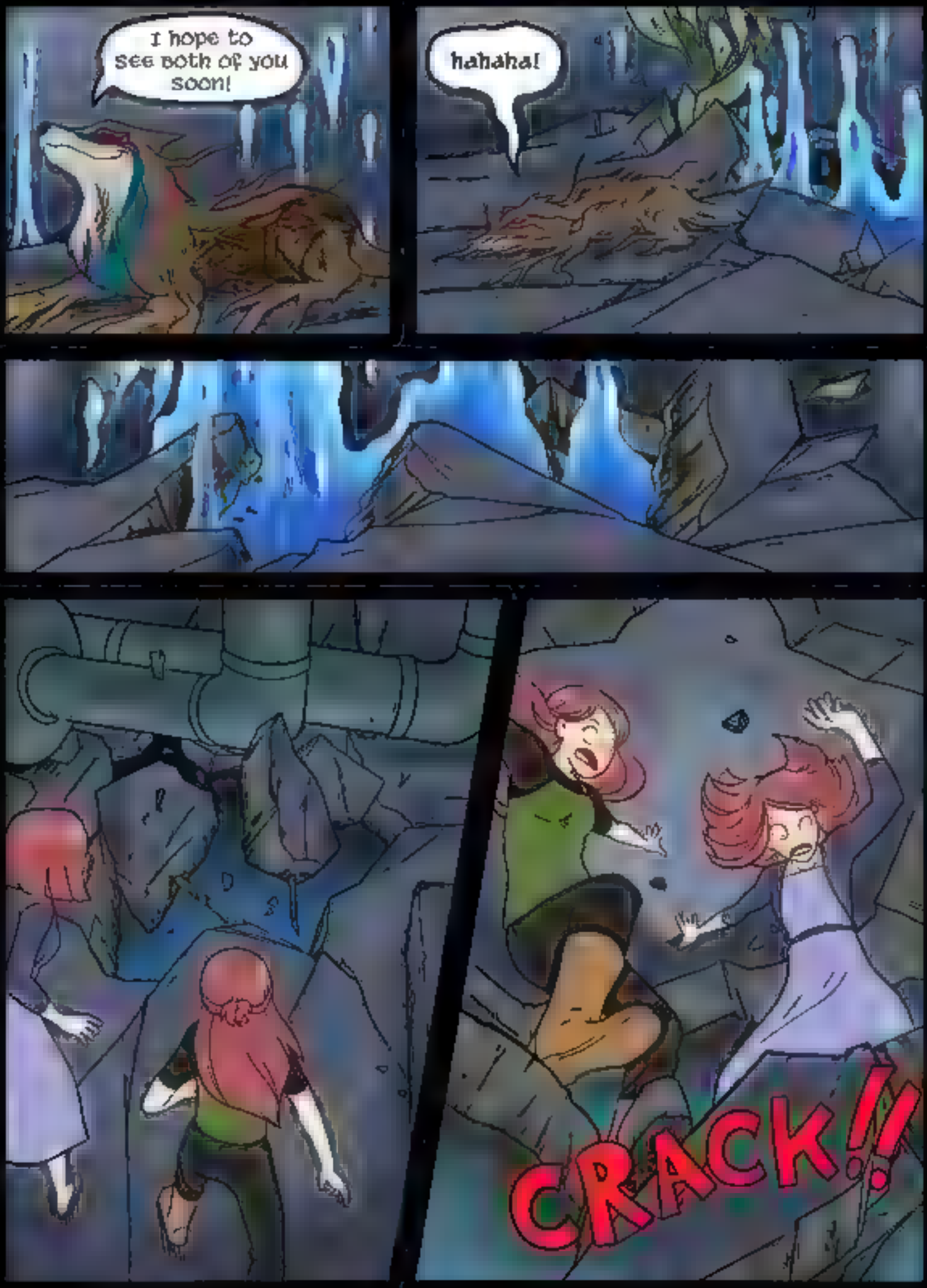
well then?
well then what?
if kat went through all this trouble, we should at least put this time to use.
pft.
we can at least figure out why you're being such a witch to me!
what did you call me?!
a witch.
don't call me a witch!

why don't you even want to talk to me?
because things were going fine until you showed up!
were they?
aside from the sweeping state of emergency I mean
these past few months father and I have finally been able to reconnect.
tick
tack
what is that?!

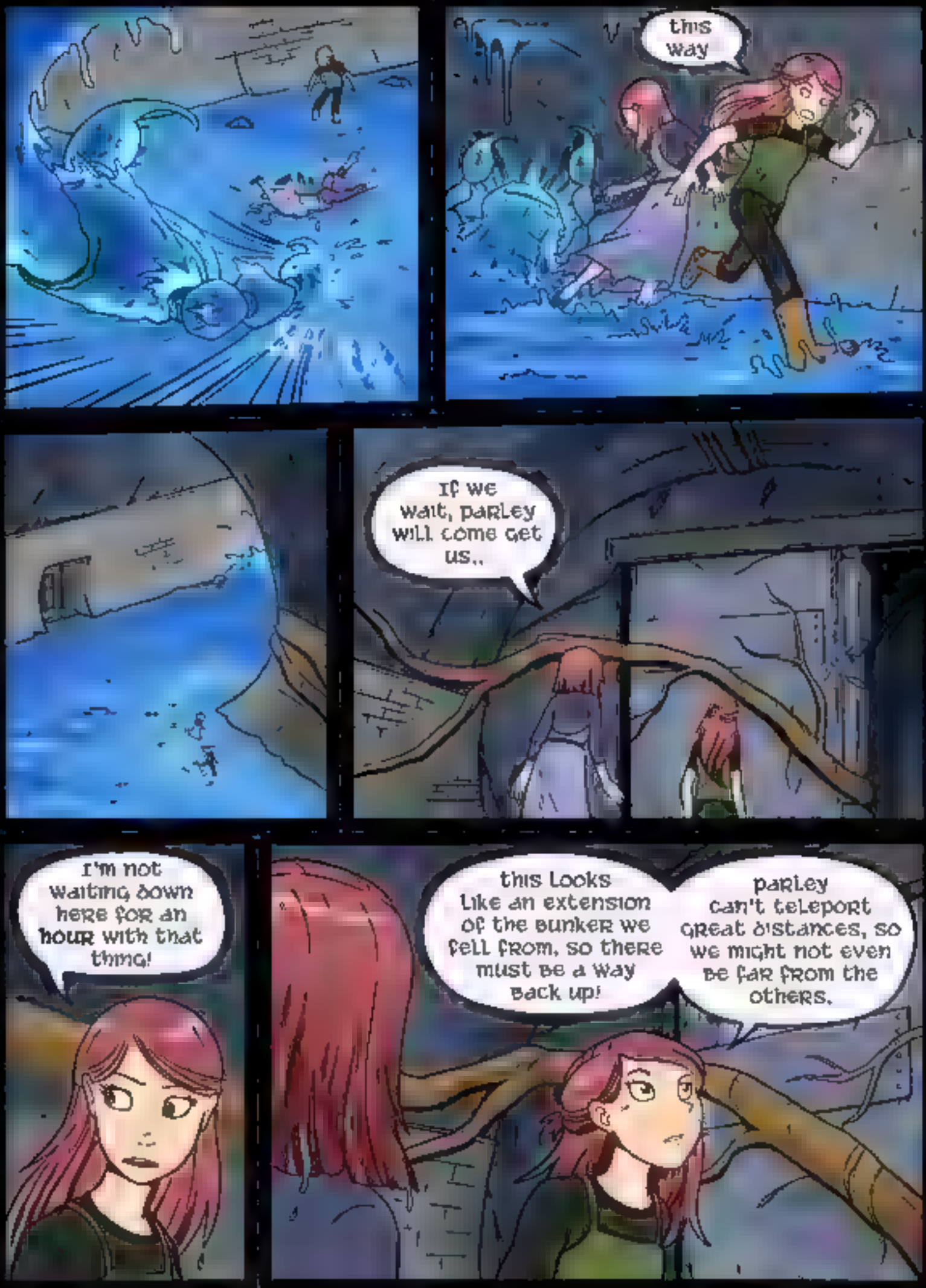
CRICK
CRACK
YAWN!

Loup!
Well then! It looks like I finally found you!
Loup, what are you doing here?
Let me begin by saying that I cannot hear you or respond to you!
This image is made from a seed I made, sent to find the two of you alone together as you are so deep inside the court!
It's an automated message?

It's been several days and yet you have not returned to the forest, my love!
I wanted to make sure you did not forget our agreement!
he calls you his "love"?
ugh, I know...
please think of me, alone in the forest, awaiting your return!
and the return of my gifts, hehe!
and one more thing ..
this message was sent to find you... but it may have led other creatures to your location!
Drip
haha!


I hope to see both of you soon!
hahaha!
CRACK!!

are you okay?!
fine, fine


this way
If we wait, parley will come get us..
I'm not waiting down here for an hour with that thing!
this looks like an extension of the bunker we fell from, so there must be a way back up!
parley can't teleport great distances, so we might not even be far from the others.

ugh, my dress...
my shoes!
I think this might lead to a stairwell .
BSSH!
the roots are soaked! this might take some time
here, let me.

you need to focus your fire into a smaller surface area.
like this.
SSSHHK
TSSSHH
you did that the other day on the train
how did you think of it?
It was actually Kat's idea.
she got it from a comic she likes, apparently
I see, I see.
and how is Kat?
what do you mean?

well, on the way here, paz told me kat was taking this whole situation quite badly.
she never said anything to me .
paz basically threatened me about it
really?!
haha, I didn't know paz had it in her!
I could snap her like a twig though.
s-don't say that!
..
but yes I could.

Who does she think she is, speaking for Kat like that?
Kat's usually very open with her feelings, but she can be quite sheltered when something is really bothering her
that's true. Paz must have noticed before I did.
Kat doesn't tend to come to me with her troubles...
despite everything she does for me - or us.
could it be that Kat thinks she always needs to seem happy so she doesn't add to OUR concerns...
and... we don't do enough to pay attention to her?
OR maybe Paz is just being unreasonable.
No! No!

It's all wet in here too...
see how it clings to the ceiling?
that's from the ashray, so we should be careful.
that thing was an ashray?!
oh, that's right, you've never seen one.
we can't do anything against it with our fire since it's made entirely of water.
remember, ysengrin warned us about creatures like that.
I talked to ysengrin, you know

you did?!
he's still alive?!
no... he's a part of loup now.
It was so sad... he seems to regret what he did.
oh, ysengrin
you're so lucky you got to talk to him.
I don't feel lucky! I've lost six months of my life!
you and kat and renard have had half a year of experiences together I don't even know about!
and all the changes in the court... it's like I've lost my home!
...
at least we've grown closer to father in the meantime.
well, as close as one can be without talking.
he's no different now.

how so?
he's very kind and funny now!
I mean, when nobody else is around, but you know how he is.
he's been no different to me!
even when Renard is not there, he barely talks...
I just assumed you were closer now. you wear makeup again...
that's because I demanded it!
I told him I wasn't going to let him decide if I could wear it or not!
I wear it to remember mother.
not that you care.
don't you dare say that!

you wanted to wear your makeup again but never stood up for yourself!
I didn't know if he'd let me!
that's why I put my foot down!
and you even stopped wearing the necklace mother gave you!
I-I didn't want to lose it in the forest!
excuses, excuses!
If you really cared for it, you'd never lose it
and now I have the only one!
that's not fair!
I didn't want to lose it!
It's - It's my necklace!

I...
I'm sorry...
I don't know why I'm acting so mean!
I know what you were thinking at the time...
I can't blame you for something I thought myself.
I really am being a witch.
huh!
we have to face facts.
you really are me. and I am you.

what are we going to do?
I don't know.
It's a little disconcerting knowing that you know everything I do.
every secret I have.
like how you think andrew is very handsome:
haha! shut up!
aaand.. I know..
don't!
who you..
don't you dare!
who you have a cru on!
noo! don't say it!
maybe some things are better left unsaid!

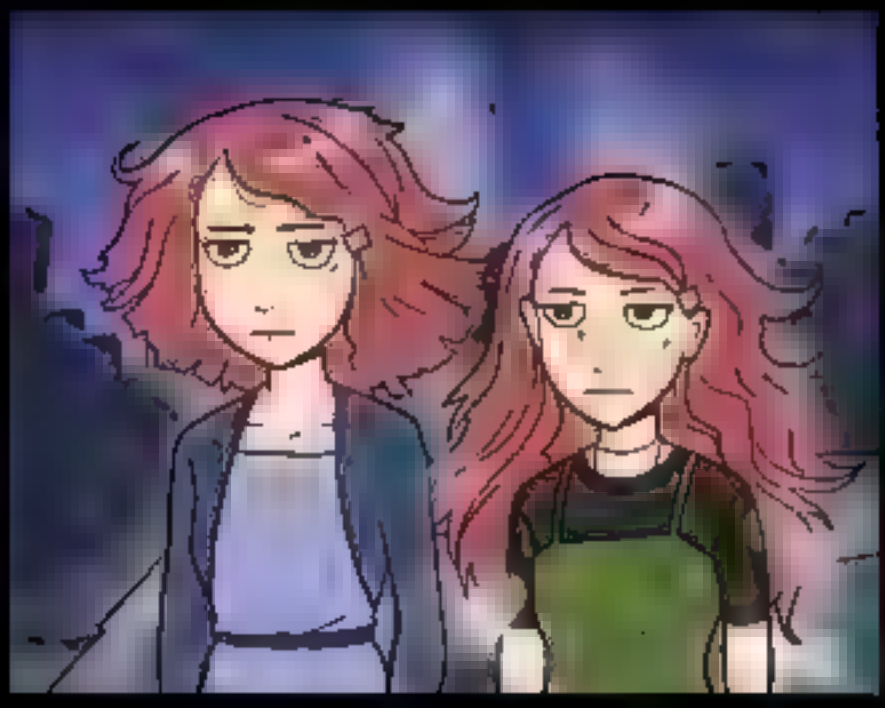
well here, Let's share it.
thank you.
and I've had enough of this place Let's get out of here.

this isn't where parley brought us, is it?
no, look, the door's open!
this is an antechamber to the outside!
SLAM
the ashray! how did it get here before us?!
it must have passed by us in those little trickles of water while we were talking!

can't you do anything with your laser beam thing?!
PAIN
It's useless to attack it directly!
the whole room is metal! don't attack the ashray, heat the walls and boil it up!
I can't heat up the whole room...
by myself!

HSSSS
now punch a hole in the door!

SSSs
PFFT
SSSSSSS
BANG



BAM

haha! you made it out, did you?
you planned all this?
yeah, sorry!
we knew you'd work together, eventually!
I hope cvet didn't give you too much of a runaround!
but.. how on earth did you create a message from loup?
and how were you able to get an ashray to do what you want?!
uh... what?
huh?
was slight change in plan, parley

ashRay attack, yes, but GIRLS LOOK after SELVES.
GOOD thing I stay back out of sight, OR I catch flame also.
this is cvet, my new work partner

So this was the mission you were away on?
That's right Eglamore thought, given what's going on, it was time for me to recruit an orjack.
Gunnerkrigg is a strange place, but I am eager to help.
Let's get back inside and you can tell us what happened.
I agree, Parley's man, Andrew, is very handsome.
For a human

I'm so sorry, guys... I never would have approved this if I knew a forest creature would reach you all the way out here!
We're going to have to rout out that whole area of those roots
But it's great that you two finally got along! haha!

the goose bone and water! we were going to talk about that
oh, right, right...
yeah, the thing is, they were both in the same facility that ysengrim's seeds grew from...
they've both been lost.

Summerheigy Court

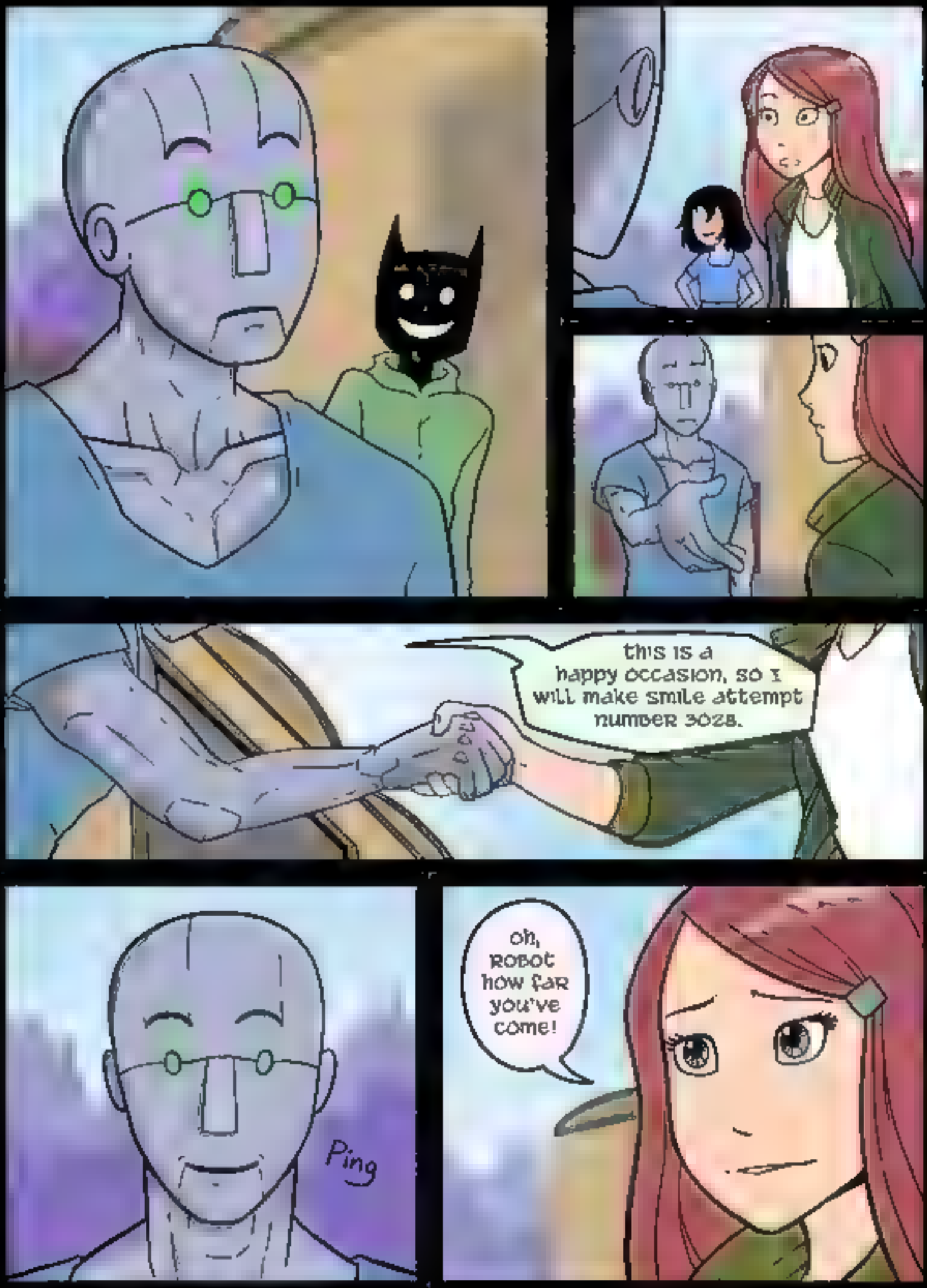
The showdowy

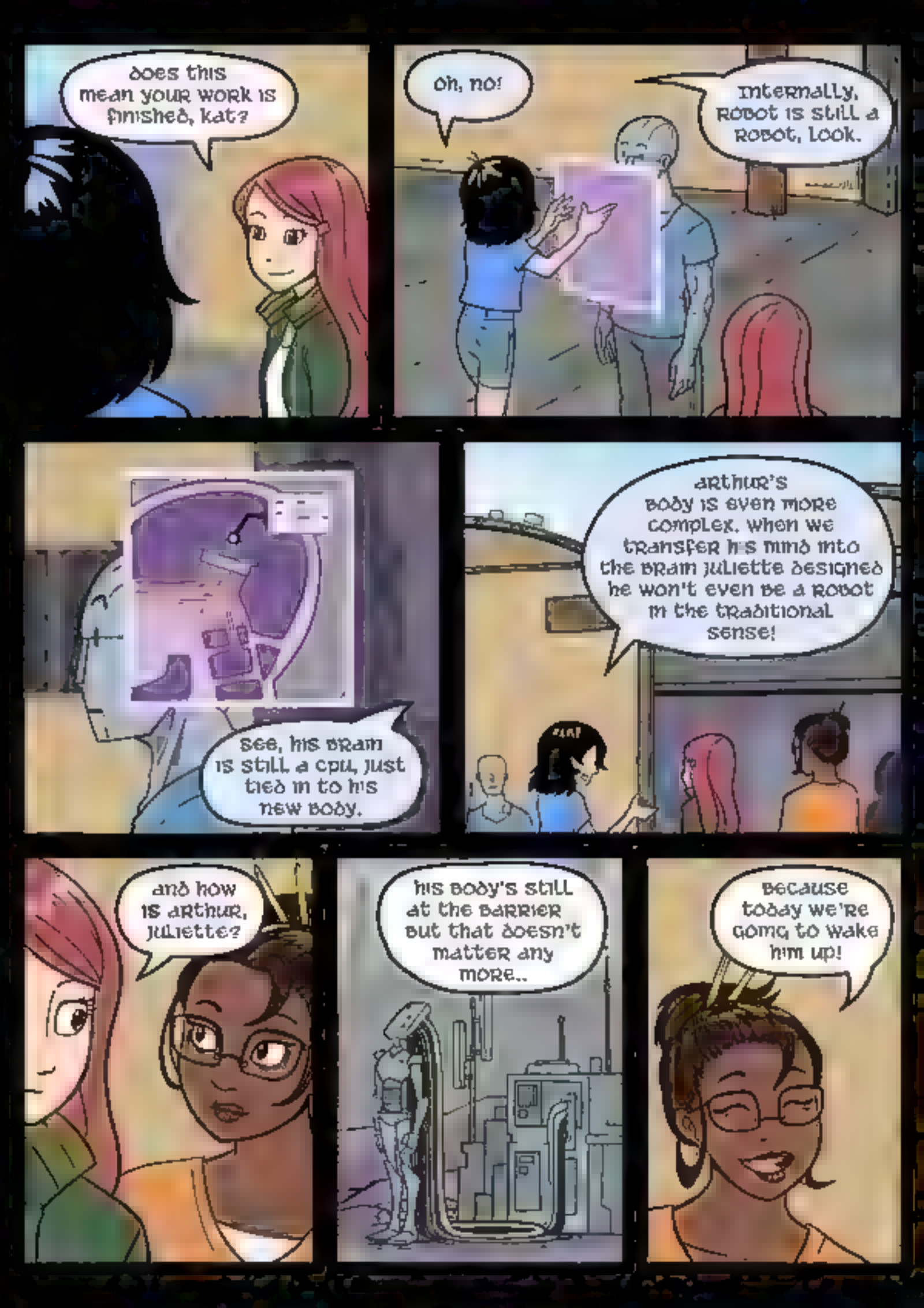
Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 71:

New Contract

and this lets you control the whole train?
yup!
since my workshop is in a yellow zone, travel there is limited, so my computer lets me keep trips a secret.
hehe, only I can touch it!
just you wait, we have more surprises to see when we get to the workshop!


this is a happy occasion, so I will make smile attempt number 3028.
Ping
oh, robot how far you've come!


does this mean your work is finished, kat?
oh, no!
internally, robot is still a robot, look.
see, his bram is still a cpu, just tied in to his new body.
arthur's body is even more complex. when we transfer his mind into the bram juliette designed he won't even be a robot in the traditional sense!
and how is arthur, juliette?
his body's still at the barrier but that doesn't matter any more..
because today we're going to wake him up!

umm... kat, I've noticed some of the seraph robots lurking around the place...
yeah, I know...
since they have cpus similar to robot's, they weren't affected when the barrier came online.
I agreed to let them help out around here as long as they keep out of my way and don't do anything weird.
they help keep the place secure and stop the overridden court robot's from snooping around.
what happened to all of your equipment?
I've consolidated it all into my computer!
it's advanced a lot since you last saw it!

but.. it's gone!
hehe, I know!
It's been moved to a secret location!
Remember I showed you how it can transfer matter?
that means all my equipment can be hidden away and I access it remotely.
It's much safer this way.
STORAGE
MANUFACTURE
PROCESSING
ANALYSIS
I even put all the old golem robots in storage
so robot and I used the space to make a home!

and arthur is over there!
yup! all ready to go.
I'm so excited!
I'm going to get ready!
In the meantime, we can uh deal with our thing.

okay.
I should be able to make a device similar to the one we used to find the arrow in the river.
If you're going into a red zone to look for the goose bone and water then this should help you out
antimony, didn't loup ask for coyote's tooth to be returned along with his other gifts?
no, he didn't mention it.
hmm

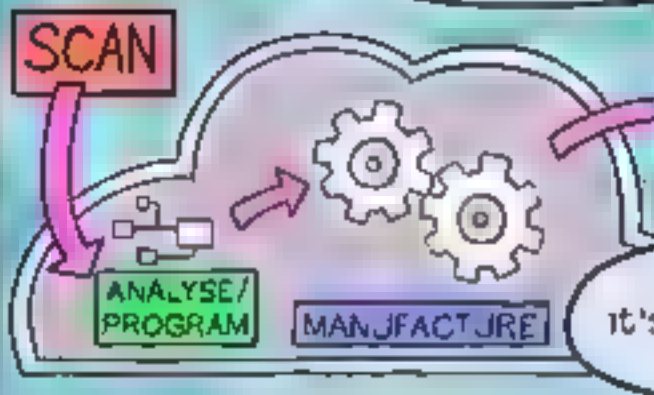
there we go.

you'll have to be kinda close to get a reading, but it should detect any object similar to the tooth I scanned.

wh-where did this come from?

I made it just now!

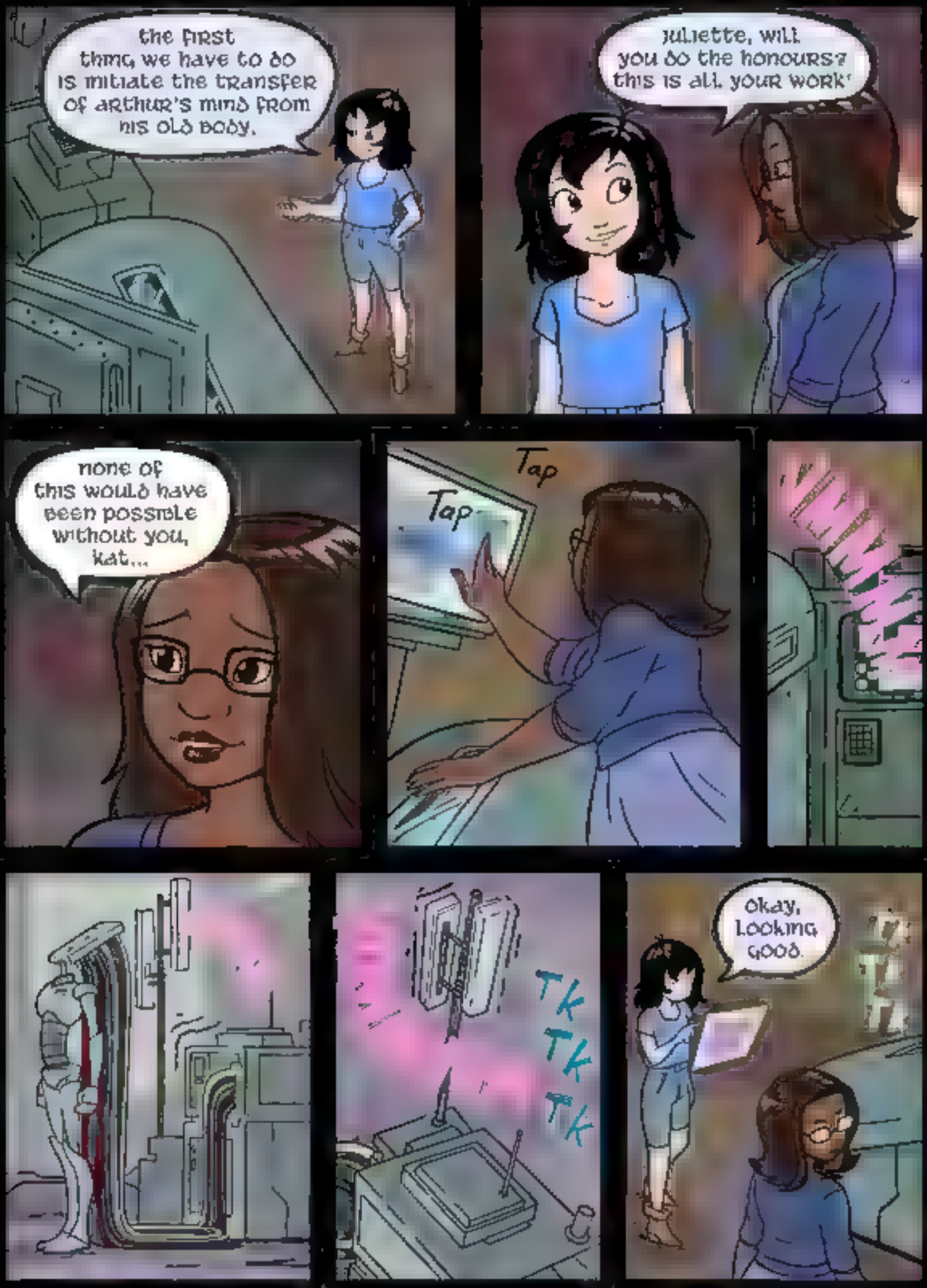
since all my equipment is with my computer, I just send some instructions and it gets manufactured remotely



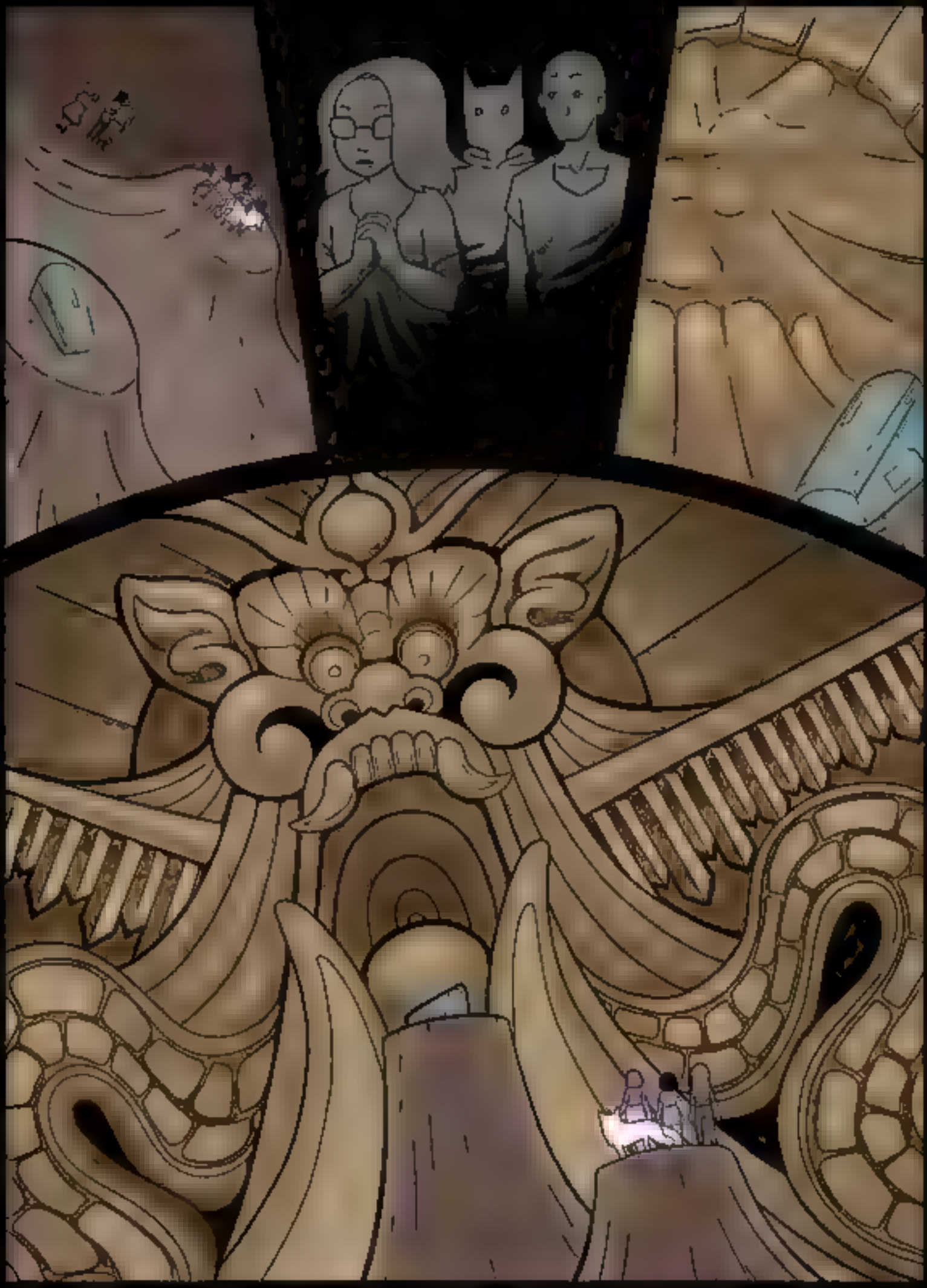
then, when it's done, it gets sent here

I've been here all these months and I still don't know how it works

very cute
okay.. I'm ready
okay, let's do this!


the first thing we have to do is initiate the transfer of arthur's mind from his old body.
juliette, will you do the honours? this is all your work!
none of this would have been possible without you, kat...
Tap
Tap
Tk
Tk
Tk
okay, looking good.

now all you have to do is wake him up!
kat, you do it!
haha, okay!
Tap
PSSSH

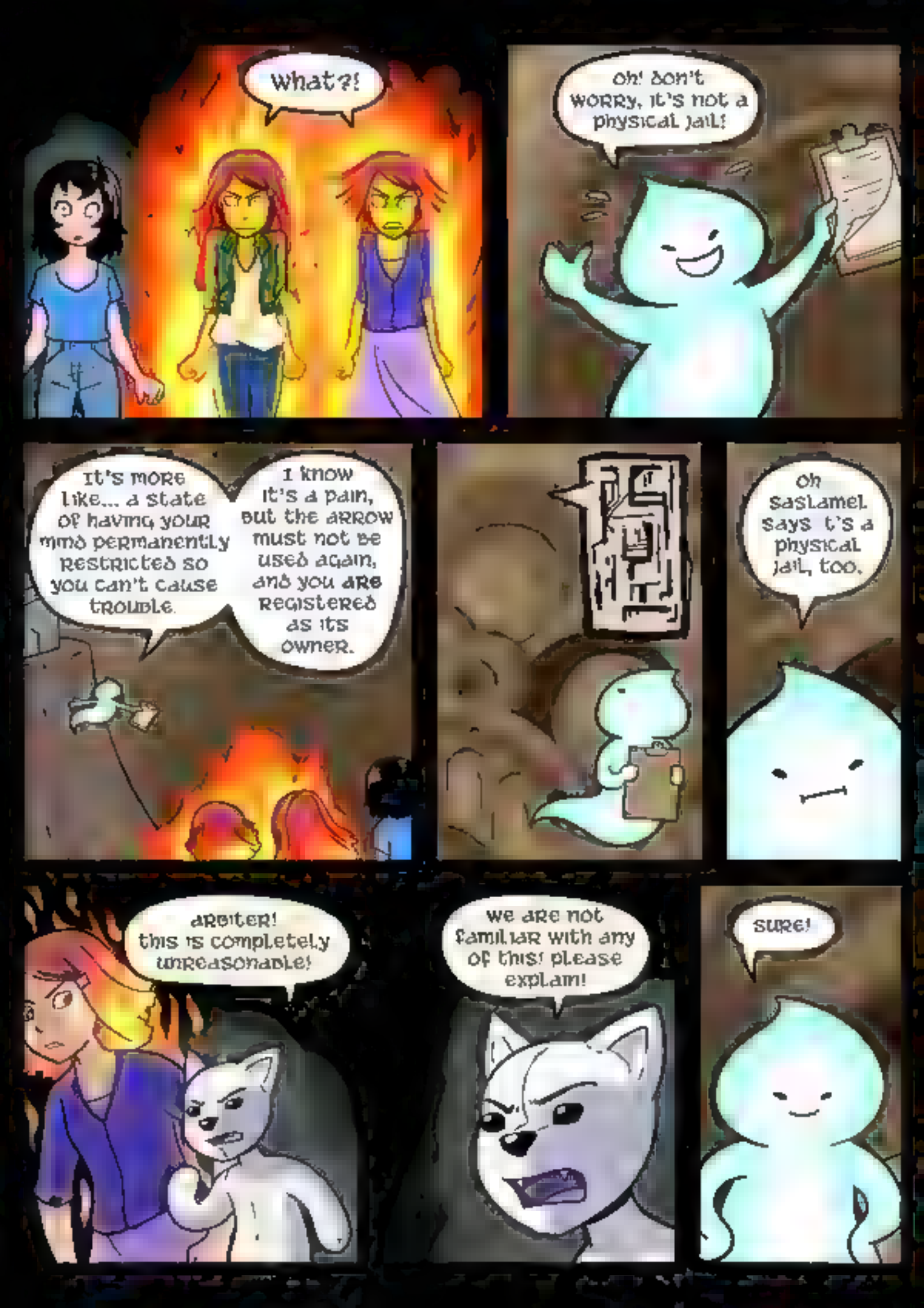


kat... are you seeing all this?
I think I am . for once
Renard?
In all my years I have never seen anything like this...
ah, hello.
could you use an interpreter?

It looks like you were about to cause a breach of contract!
But don't worry, miss, we're here to help!
This is arbiter Saslamel. He was called here because a dispute was about to be caused regarding a contract of ownership.
Let's see... the original contract was between a girl and her stuffed toy?
Oh, that would be me!
And me.
Huh... are you sisters? This is only a single use contract.
Oh, you've been shifted. That's okay then.

and who are you?
I'm just the interpreter!
arbiter saslamel doesn't get called very often and his language was forgotten a long time ago.
and he's too stubborn to keep up with modern languages.
so anyway, we have no idea how you did it, miss, but
you were about to transfer
her contract of ownership of
him
to a new creature.
uh, I am?
yeah, that's not going to work.
errors across the board, I'm afraid
the arbiter wants to know if you've seen this thing before.

oh!
yeah, I know what this is about!
Renard was in my possession for a while, and when I gave him back to annie I filtered it through that arrow, which is connected to my computer
Kat
Annie
Renard
hmm, well that arrow was used in the past to negate several contracts and caused a great amount of grief
we know about that. In fact,we resolved the problem it created!
that's great!
that's probably why we've been able to track its use!
and to prevent it from being used again I'm afraid we're going to have to put you in jail, miss!


What?!
Oh! Don't worry, it's not a physical jail!
It's more like... a state of having your mind permanently restricted so you can't cause trouble.
I know it's a pain, but the arrow must not be used again, and you are registered as its owner.
Oh Saslamel says t's a physical jail, too.
Arbiter! this is completely unreasonable!
We are not familiar with any of this! Please explain!
Sure!

since the beginning of time, any object that comes into possession by an individual enters into a contract of ownership.
this designates the object with a true owner and defines its status in the world.
Owner
Status
Object
an object that is misplaced is defined as "lost" for example
LOST
or something that is taken without permission is defined as "stolen".
STOLEN
your stuffed toy was given to you by your mother, miss antimony, correct?
you have a fairly regular contract that usually only applies to manmate objects.
OK
even though the spirit of renard inhabits the toy, you have ultimate authority over the object.

inside this capsule is a mindless body created by you, miss katerma, and you were about to bring it to life with the mind of a golem called... arthur?
a golem? you mean a robot?
same thing. really both are non-living objects that fall under the rules of ownership.
normally this would be fine. transferring the essence of one object to another is not against the rules
however, in this case you were about to illegally use a copy of a single-use contract in a multi-use conflict
not only that, but using the arrow would allow you to use the contract on a living mind, which is not acceptable.
for this, you must be punished.
oh! that's great!

huh?
well, if I understand what you're saying, the problem here is that arthur is not an object anymore, and he's now a new, living creature?
yes, you could describe it that way.
that means arthur isn't a robot anymore! this is exactly what juliette was hoping for!
um, kat, that isn't really the issue here
oh right, the jail thing.
well, I was only using the arrow for testing purposes, so I'm not trying to claim ownership of anything.
nice try!
but this transfer would not have been possible without the arrow, and the user of the arrow must be held accountable.
uh, can I get a different contract then?

the arbiter says we can only change the contract if the original owner agrees.
We agree!
this means you would be giving up ownership of renard, miss antimony.
oh
then you would be free, renard.
you could leave if you wanted. .
ha! you won't be rid of me that easily!
how could you propose I leave when you so obviously need my help still?

the arbiter is willing to change renard's status from "owned object" to "familiar", given your circumstances.
It can still be relinquished at any time.
a familiar?
I've never taken that role before.
wait! this isn't renard's original body!
will he be able to go back to his fox body if we get it back?
oh, sure. his ability to swap bodies is not our department. it seems to be a gift from coyote?
renard will still be able to possess bodies, but he will always be under your control as a familiar.
fine by me.

here we go then.

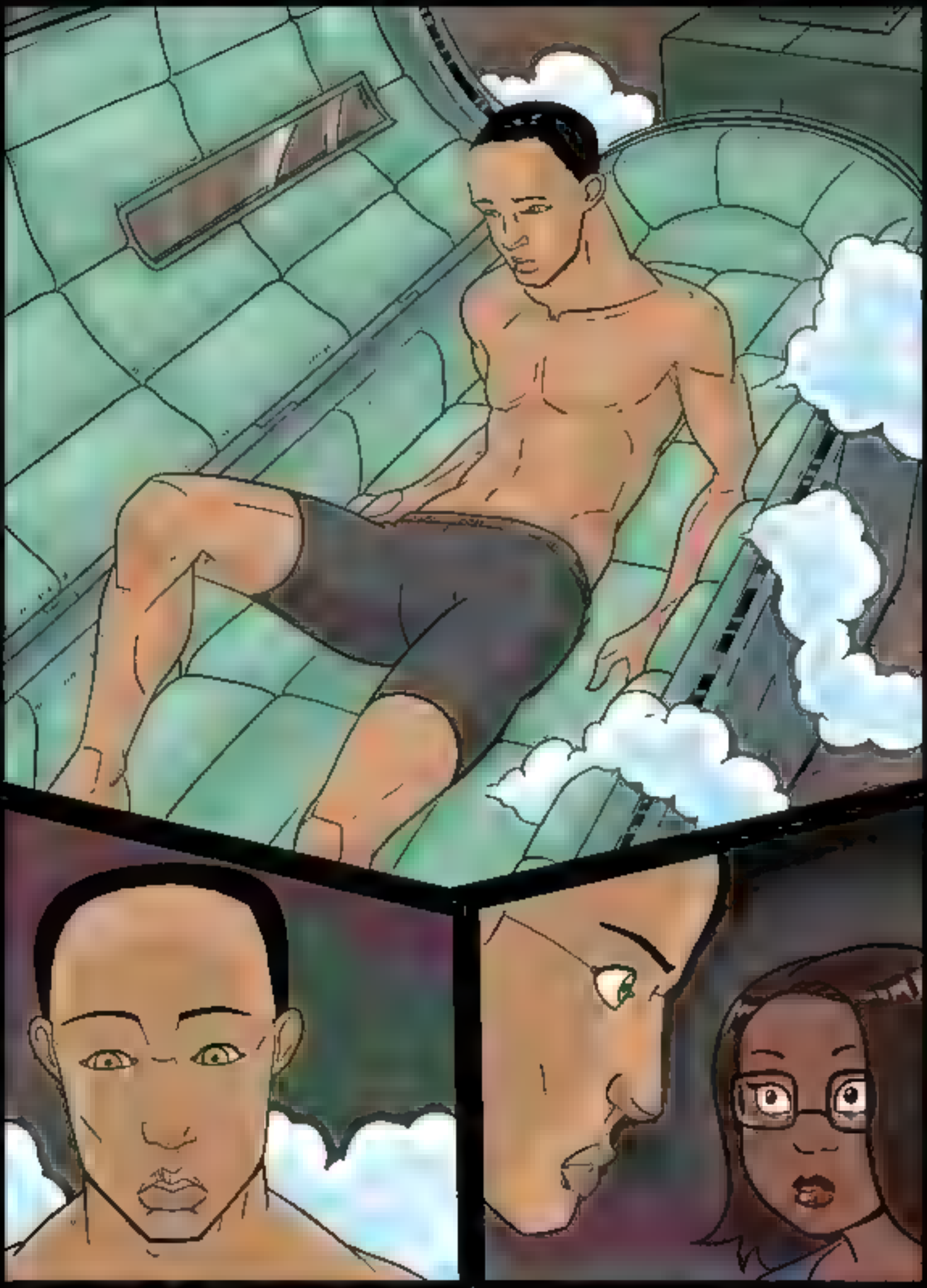
and this 's for you, miss antimony
FAMILIAR
QUICK START GUIDE
now, for you, miss katerma.
are you intending to use the same process you're using on arthur with other golems?
I was, yeah.
I have a friend I'm making a new body for, and for any other robot that wants to do the same thing.
then we can change the contract to multi-use so this doesn't happen again.
terms and conditions do apply.
ACCEPT
DO NOT ACCEPT
um, sure.
ACCEPT

all finished!
Ral' Rah
aw! don't I get a cool transformation like Renard?
sorry!
we do ask that you do not misuse the arrow again, however.
breaking contracts may result in severe consequences in the future.
yeesh. understood.
oh, wait!
you said something about annie being "shifted" earlier.
do you know what happened to her?

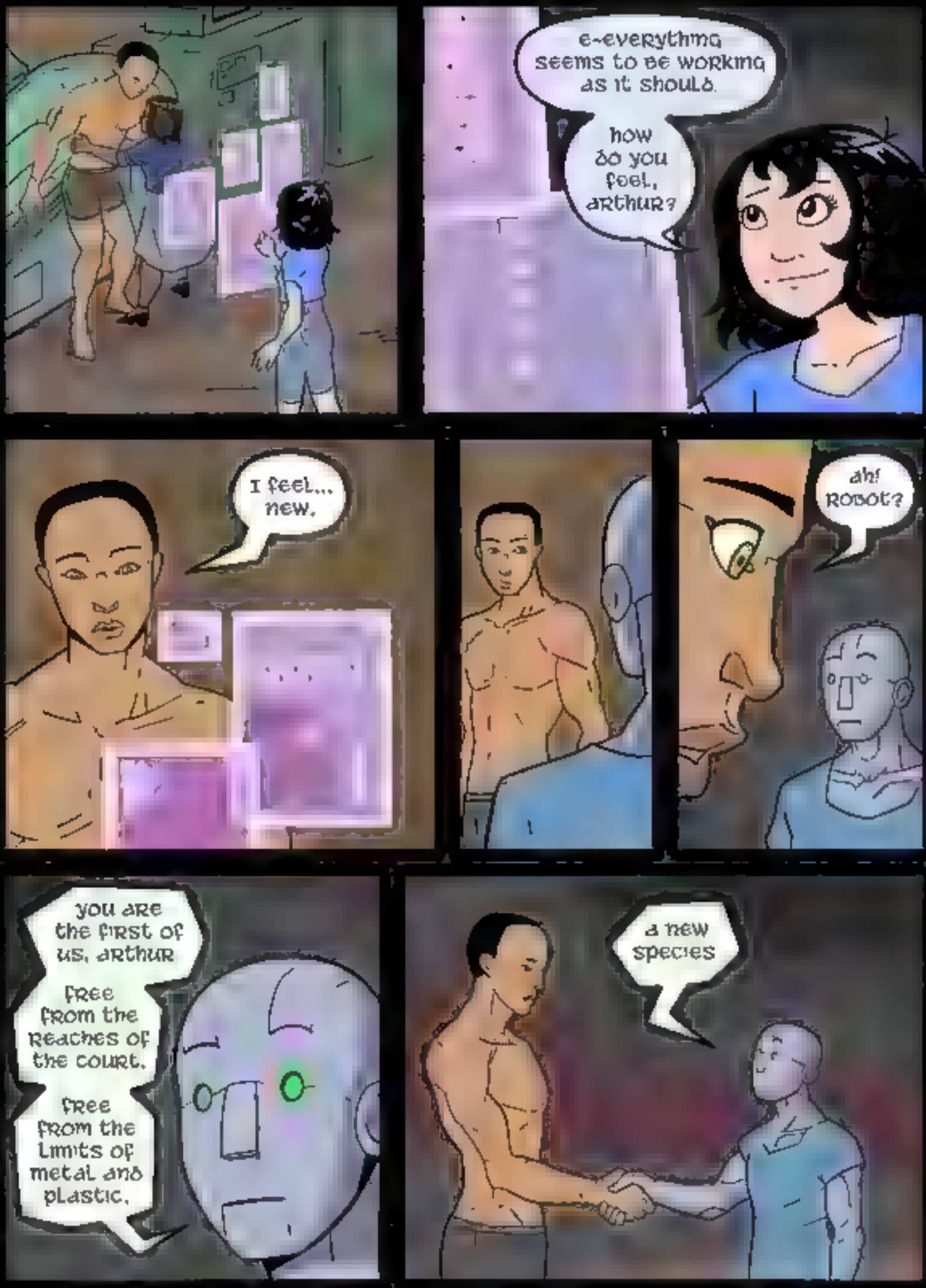
well, miss antimony, it seems that you have been shifted out of your timeline and brought here.
if you've been interacting with coyote it's no surprise, but he's really not supposed to do things like that
oh, coyote was killed? how unfortunate.
woah wait, are you talking about alternate timelines and dimensions and stuff?
that's right! normally there is no need for more than one timeline or dimension, but some creatures, like coyote, can create them if they wish
it's very inconvenient.
what happens to the original timeline when someone is .. shifted?
it continues along, but the person who is bumped just doesn't exist anymore.
are you saying there's a timeline out there where annie never comes back from the forest?

I don't know the circumstances of your case but... yes, that could happen
as I said, it's inconvenient
can you do anything about it?
sorry. this really is not our department you need temporal affairs.
but they are very reclusive. by appointment only.
or you could talk to the creature that shifted your friend in the first place
loup, was it?
can you... can you at least tell us which annie shouldn't be in this timeline?
oh, hmm.
well, it seems that neither of them should be here

what do you mean?!
sorry, this really isn't our department.
anyway, our business here is concluded
please take care with the arrow, miss katerina.
wait, you can't just leave it like that!



juliette...
we were talking and then. I lost control of my body ..
so much has happened since then, arthur..
you completed the transfer...


e-everything seems to be working as it should.
how do you feel, arthur?
I feel... new.
ah! robot?
you are the first of us, arthur
free from the reaches of the court.
free from the limits of metal and plastic.
a new species

Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 72:

Perspective

what happened to the others?!

It was a trap!
It looks like we've been separated by whatever creature made this place
I knew you shouldn't have come with us the red zones are too dangerous!
kat made the tracker for me, so I'll be the one using it.
and... where is the tracker?
annie has it.

ah. this is a wisp nest
the others must be separated also.
easier to take down our group in smaller numbers.
can you communicate with parley?
no, we are not linked in that way.
but renard is now your familiar, yes?
you can reach out to him.

RENARD!!

don't shout so loud!
I'm sorry, Renard... I'm not used to contacting you like this
even without a blinker stone we can reach you with the slightest thought now
we really should finish that glade we were given.
look, are you two okay? are you together?
parley is here with me
no, I'm here with cvet and some of the security people.
mr eglamore is here with me

cvet says this is a wisp nest.
ah, I remember those... one attacked me when I was with ysengrin once.
hmm, we will have to be wary then, wisps will attempt to play with our minds
but that is not all.
It looks like other creatures are involved.
shouldn't you be helping her?
one moment
parley is fighting a gurdig.
Pop!
she took care of it already.
poor fellow bit off more than he could chew
Pop!

how did we lose sight of each other?
I'm not sure, I was following everyone, but when I turned my head, most of you were gone.
we entered the red zone an hour ago.. who knows how long we've been led astray.
don't the security team have radios?
they aren't working.
useless!
the tracker is still giving me a reading and a direction. can we use that somehow?
do you know which way is north, sir?

C-LAP!
that way's north.
and these roots must all come from the main trunk of the tree.
we can use that as a landmark and get everyone heading in the same direction
can you talk to the other annie?
only through renard at the same time.
it's a little like being on a telephone line.
that's pretty handy!
I guess it's not such a bad thing you came along after all!

KSSH
strange...
these hives are empty.
but it looks like we can get through there.
it's a bit of a climb.
you want to grab on and I can jump us up there?
absolutely not!
oh .. you let ysengrm carry you around all the time, right?
that was different!
RUMBLE

okay, north is that way.
what else are they saying?
It seems like they are using the tree roots to head towards the main trunk of the tree, but
huh... I don't see any roots.
and we're not outside either.
let's head over that way there has to be a wall or something
so you have some kind of link with both the annies now?
yes, it's very strange I can feel they are both close by

you can use some of their fire powers too, right?
could be useful.
with their permission I can, yes .. but it's more than that..
sometimes I catch glimpses of their thoughts.
uh. you shouldn't be reading their minds without them knowing..
oh, it's nothing like that. I don't see anything they don't expressly want me to see.
but when they allow it, it's almost like I am sharing their thoughts directly.
as I said, very strange
RUMBLE

and I hear that steve, that man I mention before, he ask lisa to dinner. but remember, she recently ended relationship with anders.
am sure she is not ready to be be in anot
Lationship so soon and that is a shan
ve because I hear from ethan that
a would break up with anders sm
for a long time, but I think she
R him know emma hear
ike make sure de
s unsure of h
RUMBLE

Renard! Did you feel that?
I did... and I saw it too...
Something huge looming in the distance.
Eglamore and I didn't see anything, but it looks like we're about to go inside what's left of the building the goose bone and water were in.
already? Parley and I don't seem to be any closer to the tree...
Something's not right.
How are you doing, Annie?
Bad news I'm afraid Cvet is a huge gossip and won't stop talking!
Oh, and we saw a huge monster.

Rey! tell annie to tell cvet to fly over to that thing!
I can teleport us there and meet up with her!
Got it!
done!
okay, here we go!
...
...
It's not working!

parley says she isn't able to teleport!
well, I go to big creature anyway!
time for a fight!
kai...?
it's comma this way!

What? It's headed towards you?!
But it's headed in our direction too! How can that be?!
Look out!
BOOM

Renard, that makes no sense!
I'm telling you, the creature struck the ground with its hand, and then it became... another creature!
Parley is fending it off as we speak!
are you seeing this, annie?
no! we can hear and feel the whole place shaking, but we can't see anything like you are describing!
we're about to enter what's left of the building the artefacts should be in now

here
hmm, dark.
I can light the way.
umm...
annie! are you able to use your fire?
no! I'm not!

something must be blocking our abilities.
but you were able to do that compass trick, and so was parley
hmm, well that trick is a ward I have on my body, it's not a natural ability like your fire, or parley's teleportation.
Let's try this.
there we go still works
we can use this as a light
and you mentioned cvet can't even fly?
Leap!
thought so.
whatever's happening is keeping us in small groups.

Renard, now there are two large monsters fighting.
Really? But here, the creature is gone and it's just parley fighting the smaller one ..
Bah! not fair I cannot join in on fight.

Renard says Parley is fighting?
hmm
CLUD

did someone just throw a rock at me?!
Pat Pat
Wave
SHAKE SHAKE
SHAKE
...

woah there...
I won't fight if
you don't...
RUMBLE

careful, the whole place looks unstable.
I can look after myself you know
okay, okay
so, can the other annie give us any more directions?
oh, so even the other annie is more useful than I am?
carver, what's going on here? you've been testy this entire time.

only because you've been treating me like a child!
you don't have to be so protective of me, I chose to come here!
Look, carver, your fire powers aren't working and unless you have another tracker on you, I'm sorry but there isn't much you can do right now.
I'm not trying to be rude here, but it's my duty to be protective of anybody in this situation
It's not just you.
I know you're capable, but I've trained my whole life for things like this, and it's okay to let people help you out sometimes.
especially if you're disadvantaged at the moment.

Let's just press on for now...
um, so. It sounds like the others have their hands fu-
oh!
WAVE

Annie and Renard are saying that any other monster we might see could be the rest of our group...
So everything we see is distorted...
Let's get closer.

!!!

'bout time ya woke up!

damn
god ..
wisps!
hoo!

uh... who's that?

name's Iðra.
I been stuck here in the blasted court for months!
I was in the deep forest when everythin' froze. Likely coyote's doin' right?
anyway, I saw some creeps that was unfrozen like me, an' they went into these tunnels, so I followed 'em
um, something like that..
and they lead here.
hard livin' amongst the stones. avoidin' your patrol men.
nothin' to eat, either.
so I been huntin' wisps for food.
CHOMP

when you lot came poking around here, the wisps got together and put you against me.
I was all ready to leave you to 'em, 'til I recognised you, girl.
you came to our village some years ago.
you were there?
a' course, a' course.
anyway, I changed my mind an' set about trying to wake you up.
an' got a black eye thanks to muscles here.
uh... sorry. I thought you were a gurdig. .
no mention of it. I was tryin' to get to your man over there.
I think it's for the best annie was one of the first to wake up. her powers are perfect for this kind of thing.
? ? ?

so I guess I'm found out now.
and you'll be lockin' me up?
don't worry about that, Iara. we'll get you a place to stay, with real food.
it's the least we can do.
Beep Beep
oh! the tracker's still working!
one of the artifacts is very close by, in that direction.
this nest is mainly wood and paper, right?

ugh I can't cut through some of the wood. .
aye, it's ironwood, and it'll get thicker the deeper you dig.
no gettin' through with no amount of fire.
It's not far now
It's the goose bone!

here it is. .
huh. all this trouble for a dried bone?
SKK
I don't think I can get us any farther...

It looks like the Lake water is still a few hundred meters that way.
Idra, can you manipulate the wood? I saw some people doing that in the village
nah, sorry, I never followed that path in school.
you'll need a building team to shift this amount of ironwood.
we have to go visit Loup

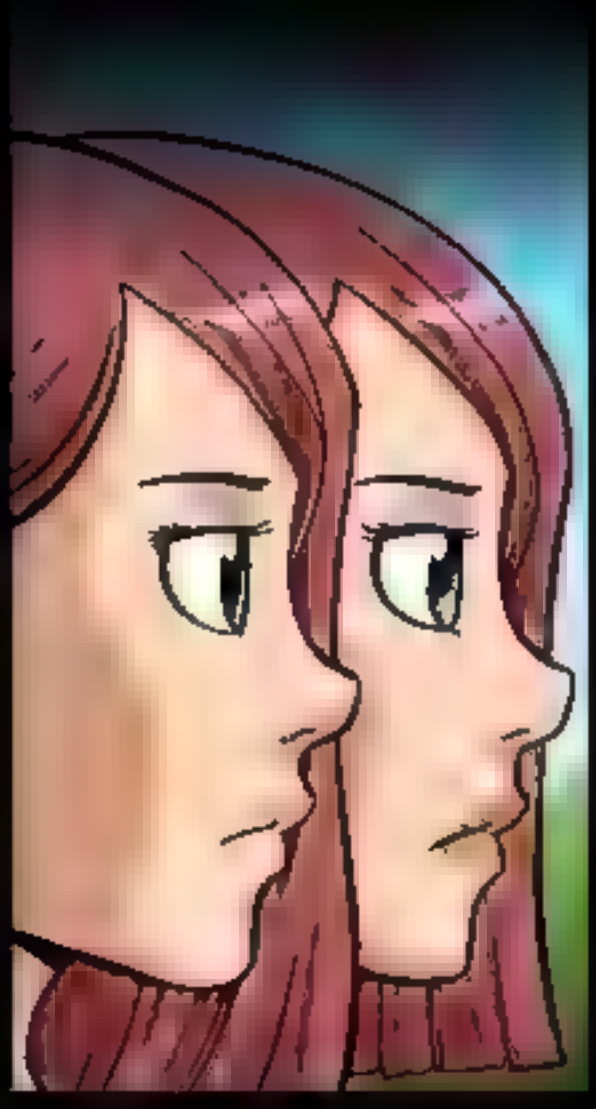
Summerhrigg Court

Idra ig the Court

Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 73:

The Goose Bone



just let me do it!
no, it's my turn!
I know, I know!
well, remember to rotate the injection site from last time.
thank you, both of you.
that should complete the full course of antibiotics

so you're off to the forest today?
yes, unfortunately we need to see loup.
well, please be especially careful this time.
we don't need four antimonys coming back!
he did it again!
father just made a joke!
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
...
...

SHRUG
kat!
hey, you two!
you're with me today, Rey?
It seems so. I'll be able to let you know if either of these two get into trouble in the forest
haha! well, we don't need FOUR annies coming back!

WARNING
ZONE DESIGNATION

Loup!
Loup? we're here!
hehe!

I'm so happy you came, fire head girl!
Why don't you come inside?
do not worry, time will pass as normal! hehe!

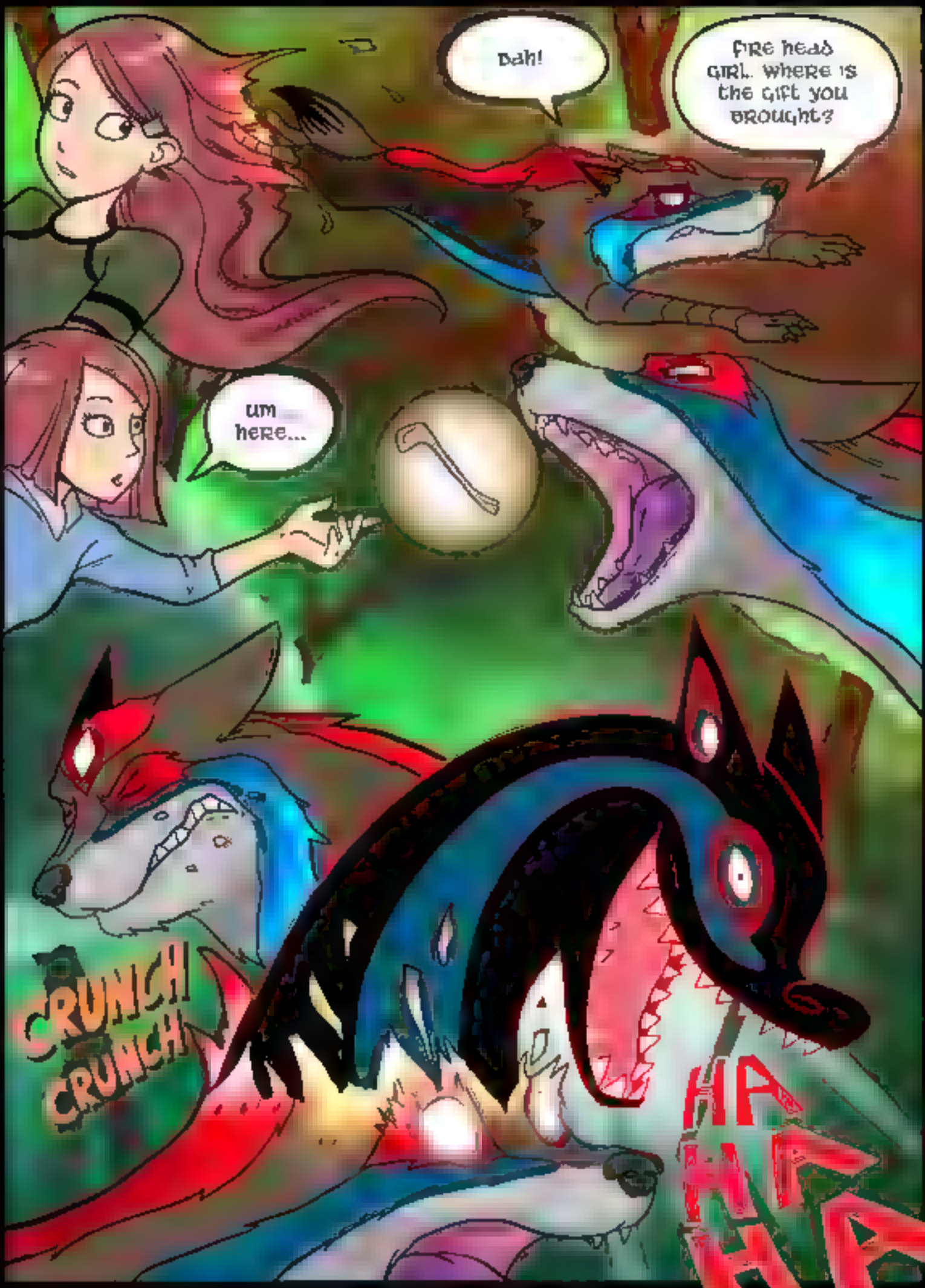
welcome, welcome! I am happy to see you, fire head girl!
and you, of course, even though we did not talk long when I last saw you!
hello Lou
did you bring me back my gifts?!

We were able to get the goose bone, but the lake water is stuck in the middle of the giant tree you made!
we need the help of some tree elves, a building team that can move all that ironwood!
hmm...
there's something different about you...
ah!
you're linked to Renard!

hey!
Renard!
Renard!
what the devil?!
ahaha! finally! I get to talk to you!
Renard! you've been away from the forest for so long!
ah... you must be Loup.
you should come back and see what I've done with the place!
hmm, there seems to be more coyote in you than ysengrin.
are you really a new creature?

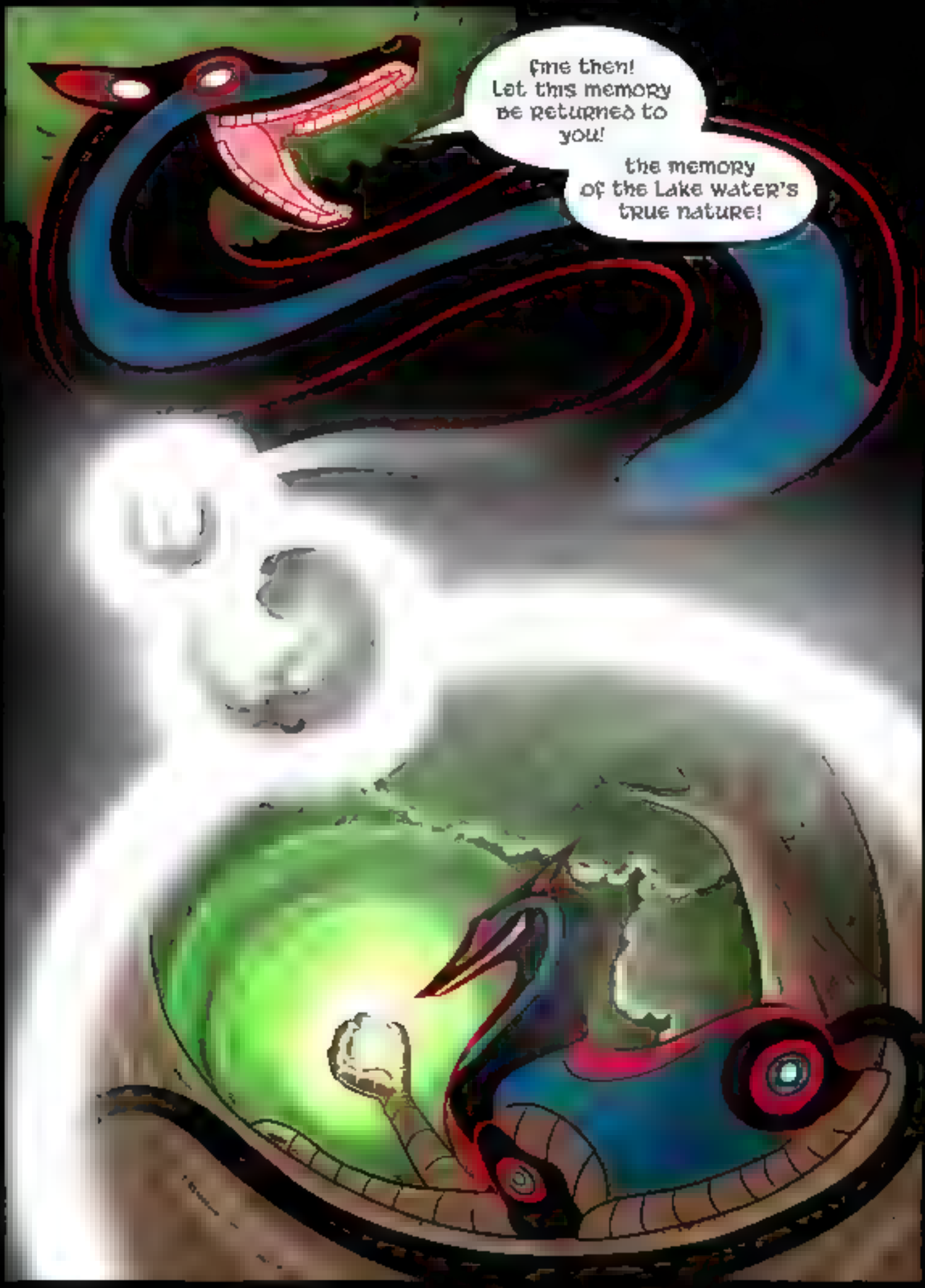
well, can you not see?
look how powerful I am!
hmm, not powerful enough to keep the forest in order, it seems
I hear the place is falling apart
bah! that's because coyote is testing me! you know his genius!
he has hidden some of his powers away in the gifts fire head girl is finding for me.
once I get them back I will truly be worthy of coyote's power!
about the child.. are you going to do something about their... situation?
the two of them? I don't see why I should have to do anything! until my gifts are returned, two fire head girls is better than one!

and you, renard? are you content being their slave?
you know you can have your body back when you return my gift.
I'll have no part in your games, Loup.
oh but you will!
you will have to, eventually-
what..
what is this...
what?


Dah!
Fire head girl. Where is the gift you brought?
um here...
CRUNCH CRUNCH
HA HA HA

ahahaha!
I see my goose bone is returned!
coyote!
you're alive?!
no! I am very much dead!
I knew something like this would happen, so I decided it would be nice to see what became of my death!
so I locked a piece of me away, along with a memory. just enough to see!
well now, let me look at you!
very handsome! if a little scruffy!
and I see you are having trouble keeping the forest together!
I know this is just a test, coyote! you hid the ability to control the forest from me!
oh, is that what I did?

once I get them back I know I will surpass even your power!
but you must not keep them from me any longer. the court is up to something!
are they now?
yes! I was speaking to Renard and almost caught a glimpse of it
he must have been nearby whatever it was...
I see, I see.
well, it is true that you will be more than powerful enough to shape this world when all my gifts are returned.
but until then it looks like you need the help of mere children!
WINK


Fine then! Let this memory be returned to you!
the memory of the Lake water's true nature!

the Lake water is just a memory of something else?!
HEHEHE!

Loup! It must be frustrating being less than the sum of your parts!
If the integrity of the forest relied on these memories I took from myself, how was I able to keep everything together until you came along?
GRRR!
Ysengrin was never able to fully control the power I gave him either. You remember how he used to shake and tremble!
And now you do the same with the forest itself!
No matter how highly you think of yourself, Loup, Ysengrin is a part of you.
And a creature such as Ysengrin cannot expect to take my power and know how to use it correctly!

the Lake water will not help you control the forest
everything you need is inside yourself!
then what are you hiding from me?!
hahaha! you know I won't tell you that!
but I will give you a hint:
it will reveal to you.. a plan!
a plan I have had in mind for a long time!
and when you learn of it, you will agree it is a wonderful plan!
and then you will die!

fire head girl! I will see you again if you see fit to return the lake water to our new friend!
but for now goodbye!
and then I will die?
hmm...
nonsense!

there is nothing that can kill me, except for myself!
and, unlike coyote, I do not want to die!
I have only just begun to live!
But how can I do that when coyote hides things from me?
I can't even control the forest!
It's not fair!
It's not fair!
but coyote says you have everything you need inside yourself.
and coyote doesn't lie!
how naive!
he may never lie, but he also does not tell the truth!

It must be Ysengrin's influence that makes me weak!
If you see that part of yourself as negative, then no wonder you can't do what you want!
Ysengrin has his own strength too, you know! Just because it wasn't the same as Coyote's doesn't mean it wasn't real!
Maybe realising that could actually help you get the forest working again.
Bah! Foolishness!

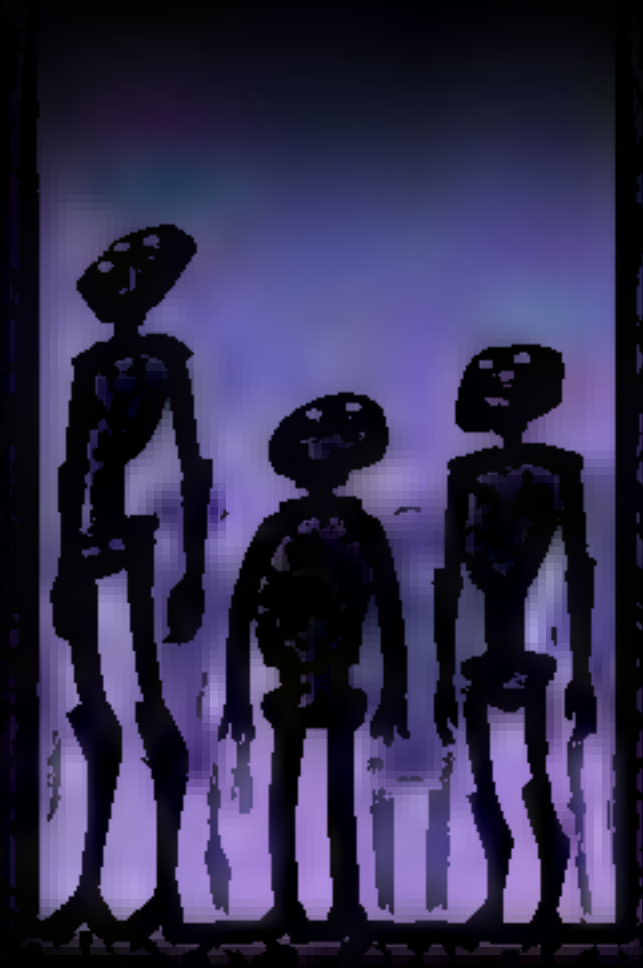
Ysengrin could be bitter sometimes too, and it looks like you're in touch with that part of yourself
Nod Nod
Bitter, eh?
I'll show you bitter!

you say you need the help of the tree elves to get my gifts back?
so be it!
take them all!
they are no longer welcome in my forest!

Gunnerkrigg Court

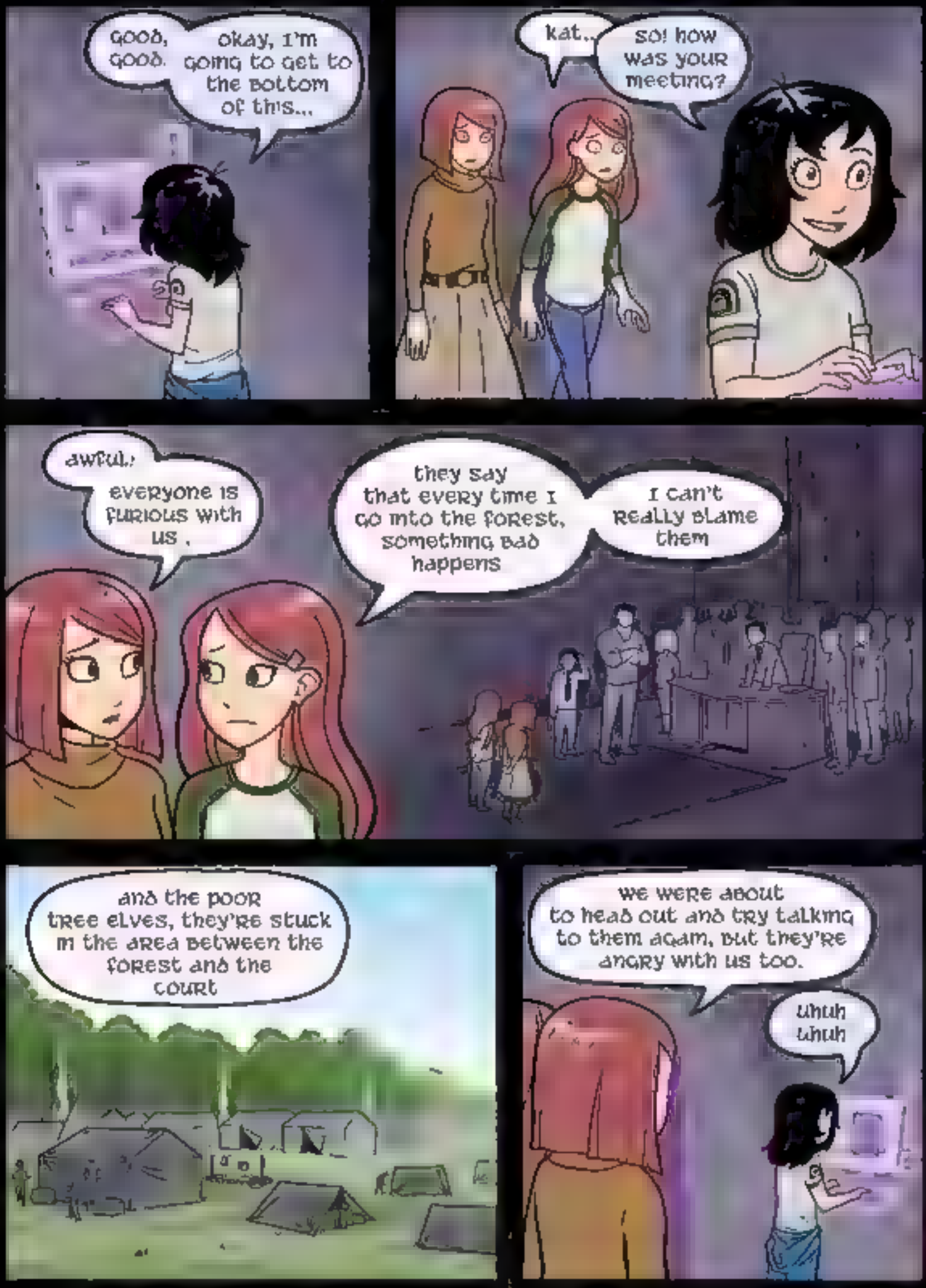
Chapter 71:

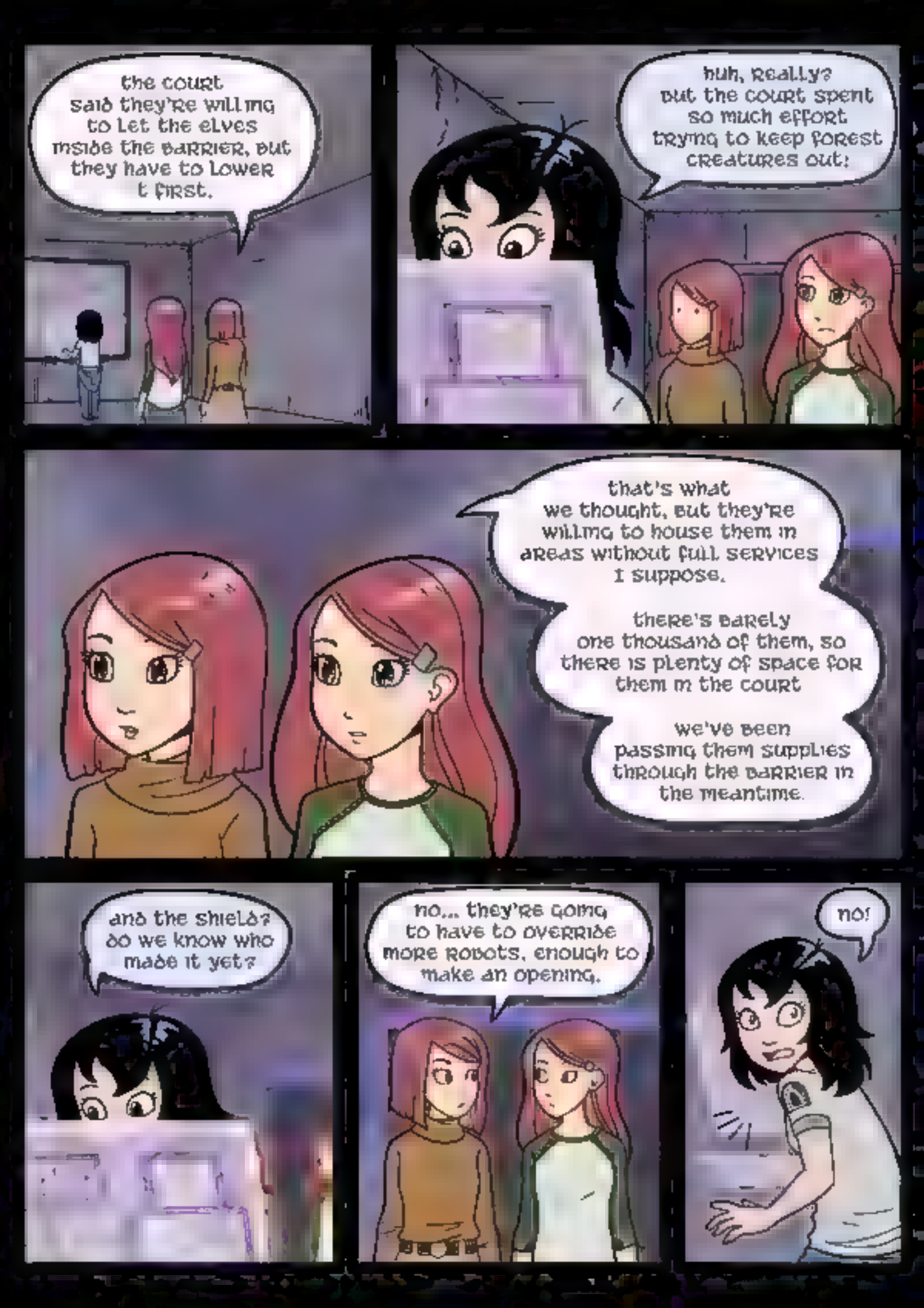
Moving



oh .

kat is everything okay?
forget about it she's just being stupid.
anyway! it's a good thing you came!
you stand there.
and you stand here.


good, good.
okay, I'm going to get to the bottom of this...
kat..
so! how was your meeting?
awful.
everyone is furious with us .
they say that every time I go into the forest, something bad happens
I can't really blame them
and the poor tree elves, they're stuck in the area between the forest and the court
we were about to head out and try talking to them again, but they're angry with us too.
uhuh uhuh


the court said they're willing to let the elves inside the barrier, but they have to lower it first.
huh, really? but the court spent so much effort trying to keep forest creatures out!
that's what we thought, but they're willing to house them in areas without full services I suppose.
there's barely one thousand of them, so there is plenty of space for them in the court
we've been passing them supplies through the barrier in the meantime.
and the shield? do we know who made it yet?
no... they're going to have to override more robots, enough to make an opening.
no!

When they override the robots they take out their cpus and replace them with a rudimentary AI!
It basically turns their bodies into zombies!
and with the rest of the robot services out of commission, their brains will be stuck in a box somewhere!
But... hmm...
maybe there's something I can do..
I have to talk to Juliette.

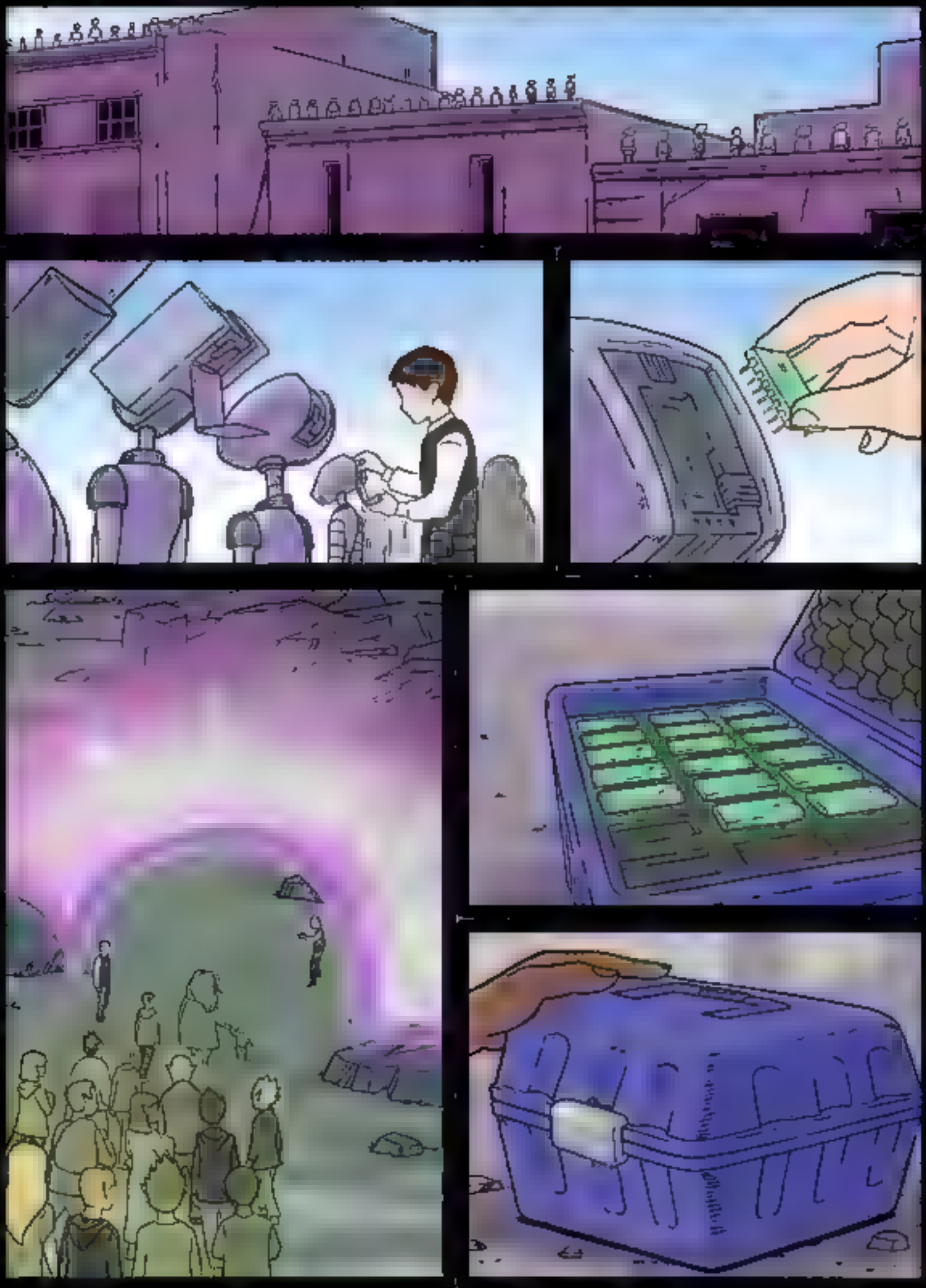
so, annie girl, you know the others won't be talkin' to you
I know
you been messin' too much with coyote and now look at us
we can't go back into the forest. we're stuck in this no-man's land with nothin'!
mrs anwyn, the court is very sorry for everything that's happened.
we can get you anything you need while we try to lower the barrier.
then you're welcome to take shelter in the court during all this.
yeah? an' what makes you think we want to go into the court?

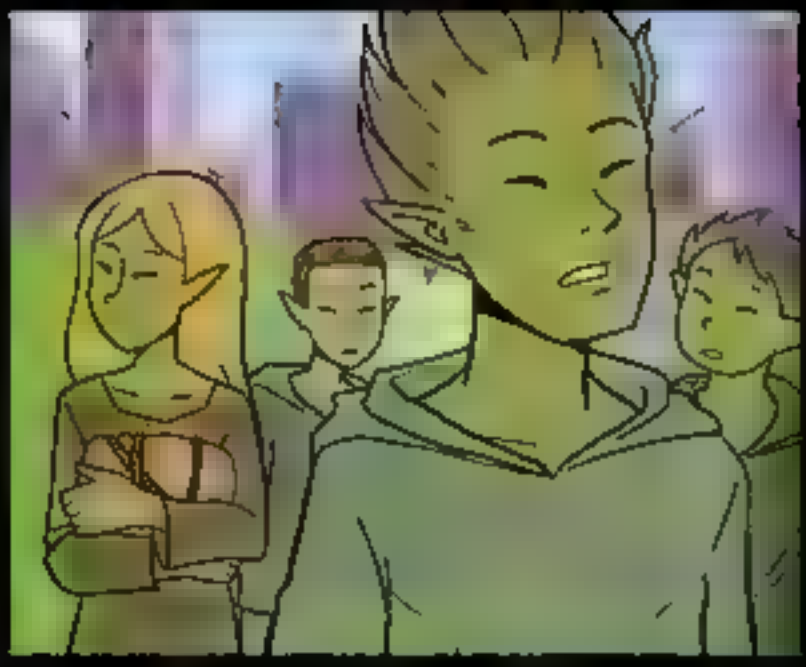
See, with coyote, we knew to keep well enough away.
Him and Ysengrin roamed the woods and let us be.
But in a way coyote kept things runnin'.
Magic was a little bit stronger when he was around.
Huntin' and harvesting was a little bit better when he was happy.
He'd just as soon turn a fool inside out, mind you, but we knew where we was with him
Now the court, there's no trustin' 'em

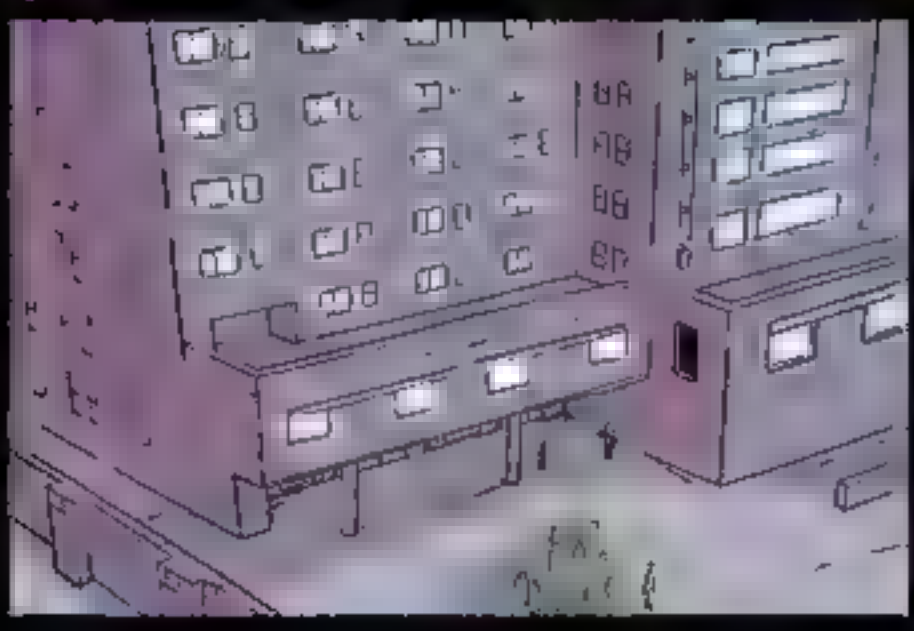
anwyn, you seen what happened to the court
that ysengrim went crazy an' killed coyote! all this is his fault!
oh yeah? an' what are you doin' runnin' around in the court, iora o'kerrigan?
why are you the only one of us left untouched?
I don't know the answer to that, anwyn, but my family was affected just as was yours.
I came out here to talk to you because I trust the court will let me back in their barrier like they said.
the food's odd, but they got beds an' roofs an' they've treated me good.

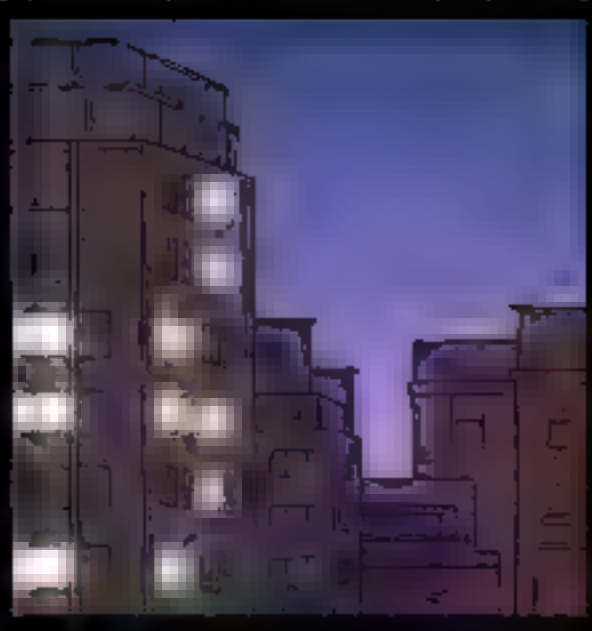
and what does the court want in return for helpin' us?
we... need some help moving some ironwood.
ah, I see.
It's more meddlin' you want to do, yeah?
and now you want to get us involved.
look, khepi, Loup is in charge of the forest now and he's made it clear that he won't fix anything until he gets what he wants.
we've all been affected by this
this Loup character is what did this to you?
NOD
and you trust him to do as he says?

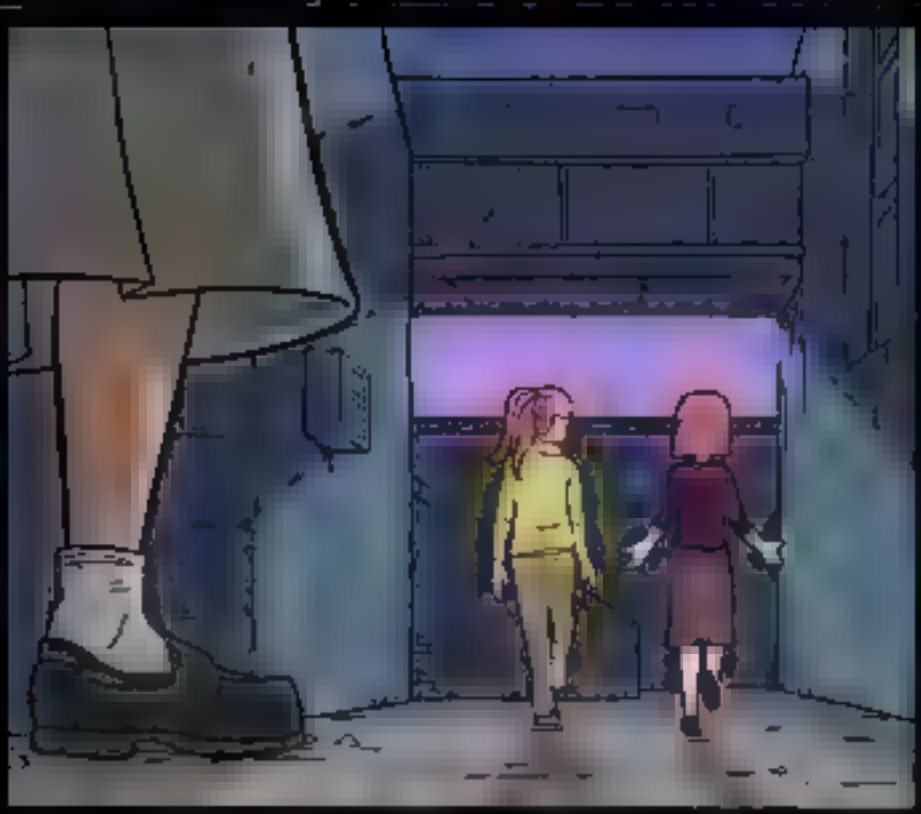
I can talk to the other families and try to get them around.
I know some is scared of the court but there ain't much choice.
an' Mark can get to roundin' up some builders for ya.
thank you, Khepi!
and this magic wall you got around the court?
we're working on making an opening you can all pass through.
we just need a few days.











antimony.
oh, paz
um... is everything okay?
why are you doing all this?
you don't understand how much you are upsetting kat.
I told you before how worried she is about you!
kat what happened?

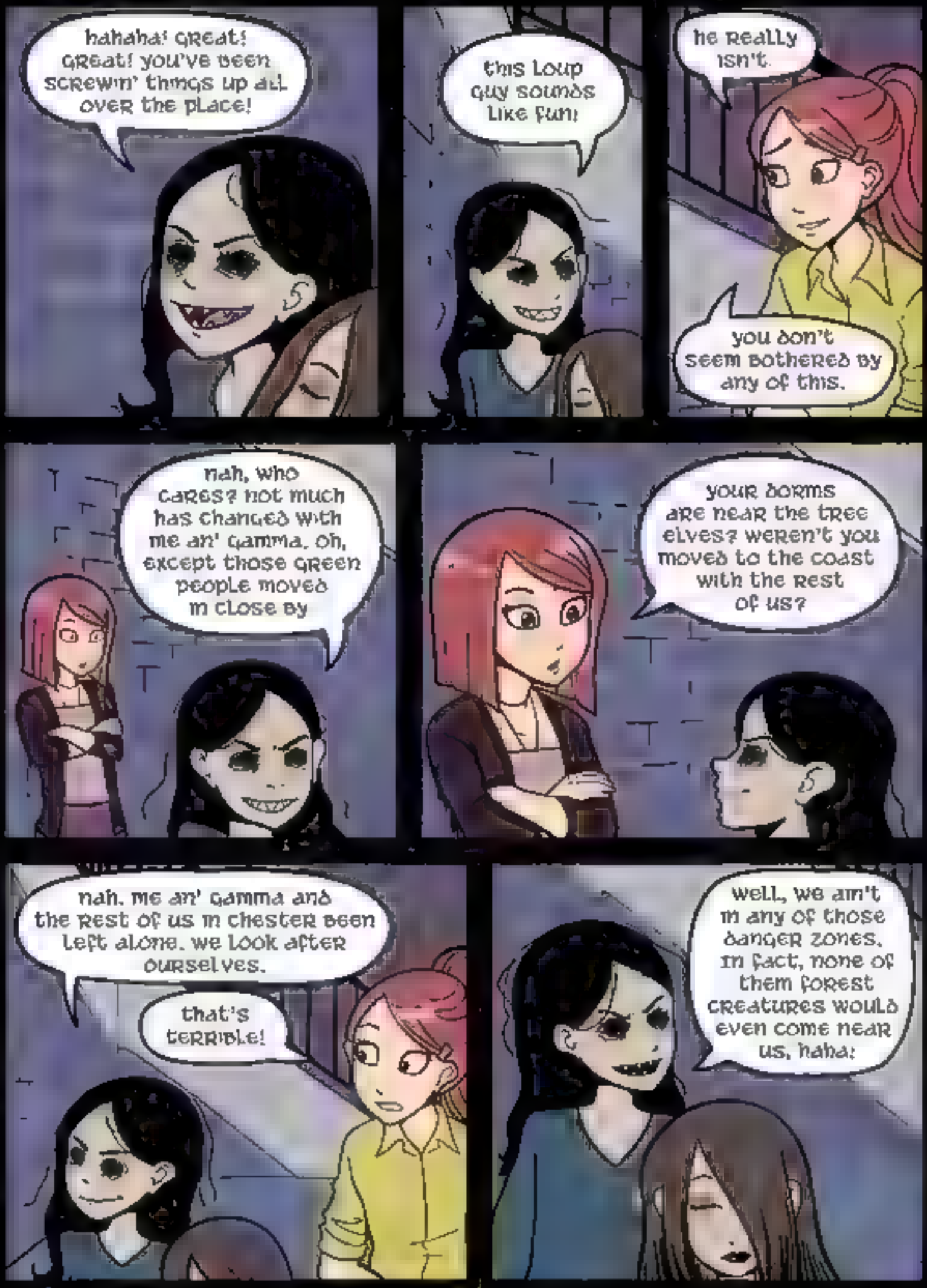
I thought she was getting better about your situation...
But since a few weeks ago she's gotten worse!
I... I had no idea!
That's the problem!
You do not know how upset she is!
Kat's so busy, she has a lot of projects
Be quiet!
I know she does a lot of work with the robots!
I know she is special!
But that work always made her happy!
Now she is like a different person! She does not sleep! She cannot concentrate!

she is obsessed with you!
I - we can try talking to her
no! everything you do makes it worse!
you do not deserve to be her friend!
don't say that!
OR what? you will burn me?
no! I'd never -

I do not know what you are doing, but everything has changed because of you!
all the robots stopped working months ago and school is still in those temporary class rooms.
we moved to the new village too, but at least kat was still okay!
then you came back and everything changes again.
everyone is saying it's your fault!
well that don't sound fair.

Zimmy Gamma
seems like your friends are gangin' up on you, carver.
but that wouldn't be a good idea, would it?
heh!

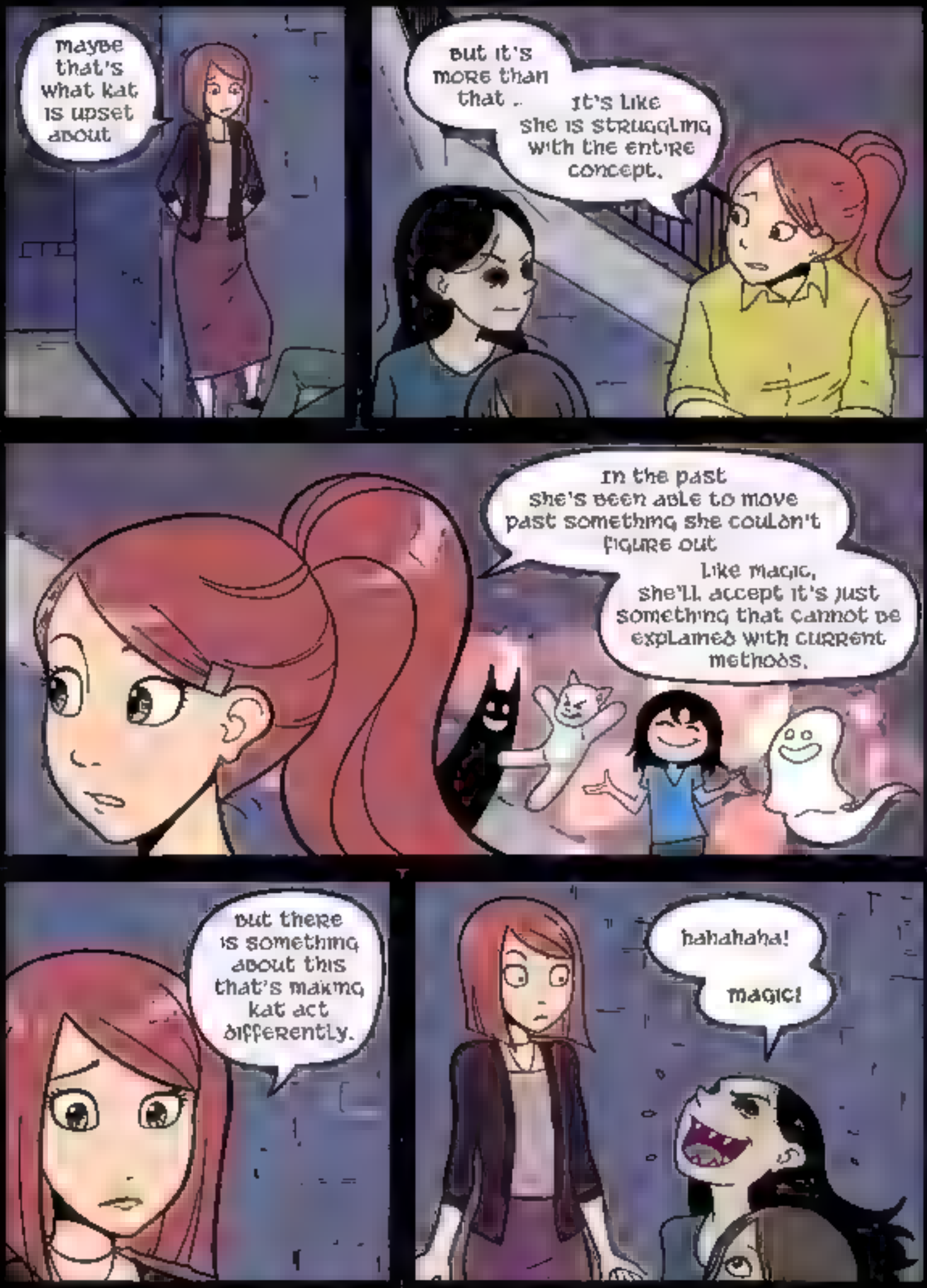
Zimmy it's been a while
heh, yeah! seems as you been pretty busy!
what's all this about?
it's a long story...
well we got time, if you don't mind gamma dozin' a little.

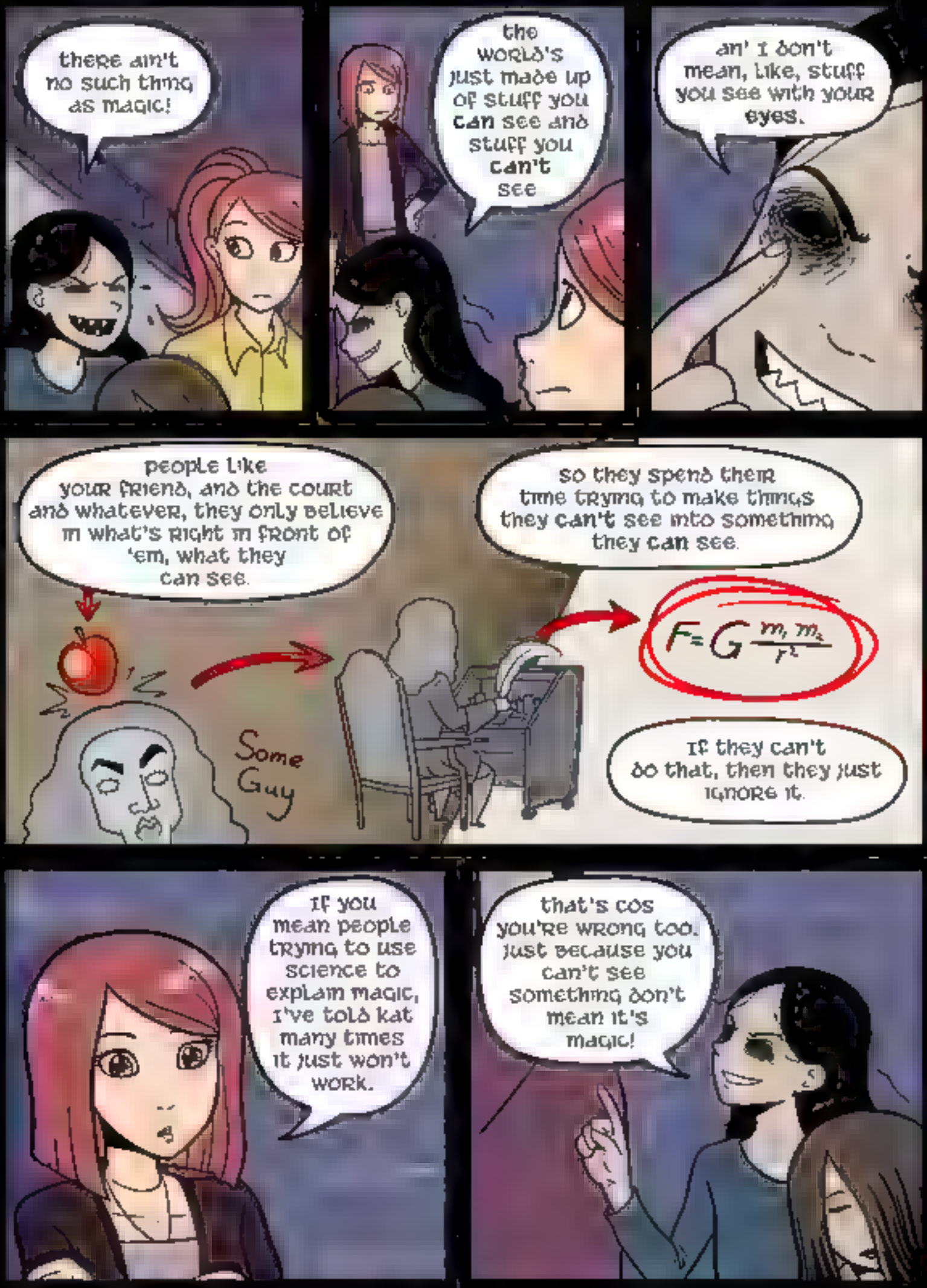

hahaha! great! great! you've been screwin' things up all over the place!
this loup guy sounds like fun!
he really isn't.
you don't seem bothered by any of this.
nah, who cares? not much has changed with me an' gamma. oh, except those green people moved in close by
your dorms are near the tree elves? weren't you moved to the coast with the rest of us?
nah. me an' gamma and the rest of us in chester been left alone. we look after ourselves.
that's terrible!
well, we ain't in any of those danger zones. in fact, none of them forest creatures would even come near us, haha!

the court's been shutting everything down in the area you know
no classes or experiments or nothin'
remember that power station we went to? it's been almost completely taken apart
it seems like the court's gettin' ready for something.
like what?
who knows? all their experimentin' must have been for something.
all I know is they're done with me an' gamma and that's fine with us.

now, you wanna tell me what all that was with that girl earlier?
paz? she's kat's girlfriend.
oh yeah? they broke up, right?
no, but they had a big argument
she's not been dealing with things very well it seems. kat I mean.
ever since I came back she's been concerned with how annie and I could end up like this.
oh, you mean how you was split?
it's not a big deal. gamma and I seen it before.
you have?!

SURE, SURE! BACK WHERE WE USED TO LIVE IT'D HAPPEN SOMETIMES TO UNLUCKY PEOPLE, HEHEH
AND WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM?
DEPENDS.
HOW VAGUE!
WE'RE JUST HOPING LOUP WILL PUT THINGS RIGHT WHEN WE DO WHAT HE SAYS.
OH YEAH? AND ARE YOU GONNA PICK WHO STAYS?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
WELL, IS ONE OF YOU GONNA GET ZAPPED AWAY OR WHAT?
WE... DIDN'T THINK OF THAT


maybe that's what kat is upset about
but it's more than that ..
it's like she is struggling with the entire concept.
in the past she's been able to move past something she couldn't figure out
like magic, she'll accept it's just something that cannot be explained with current methods.
but there is something about this that's making kat act differently.
hahahaha!
magic!


there ain't no such thing as magic!
the world's just made up of stuff you can see and stuff you can't see
an' I don't mean, like, stuff you see with your eyes.
people like your friend, and the court and whatever, they only believe in what's right in front of 'em, what they can see.
so they spend their time trying to make things they can't see into something they can see.
$F = G\frac{m_1 m_2}{r^2}$
Some Guy
If they can't do that, then they just ignore it.
If you mean people trying to use science to explain magic, I've told kat many times it just won't work.
that's cos you're wrong too. just because you can't see something don't mean it's magic!

you can look into the unseen world, right? when you concentrate?
when I look into the ether?
whatever you call it
that's just looking beyond what regular people can see, it ain't magic.
there's a lot more even you can't see.
an' I bet there's a bunch of stuff your friend can do that you can't figure out, no matter how much she explains it to you, right?
I suppose...
an' that ain't magic neither!

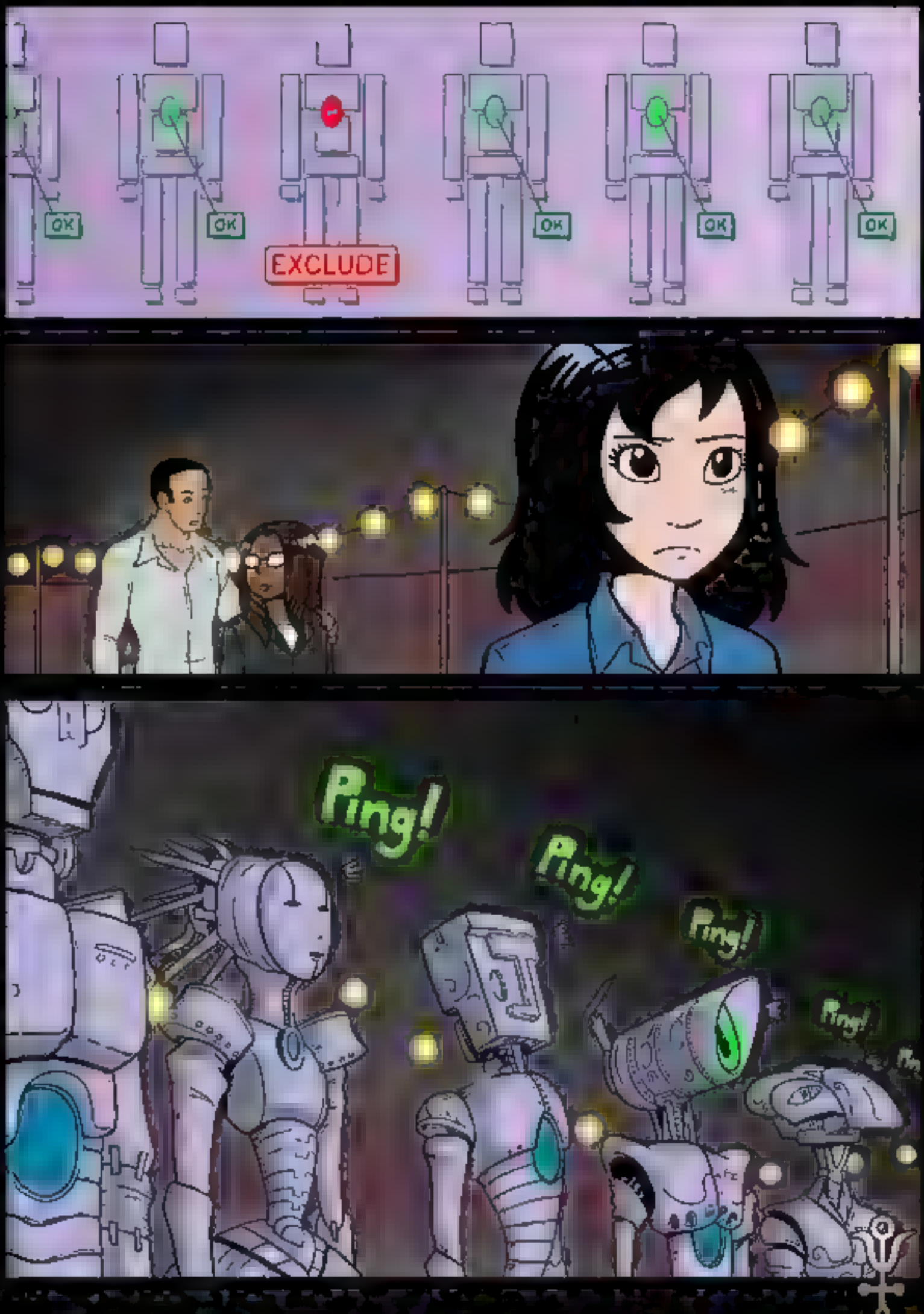
so you're saying kat is correct, then. magic is just something waiting to be explained.
nah! 'cos what you call "magic" is just a bunch of stuff that is only explained by not having an explanation!
um...
you two are both right and wrong at the same time, haha!
you sound a lot like coyote.
yeah? maybe because he gets it
an' this loup guy? it sounds like he doesn't get it at all even though he can control... stuff
me, I get it, but can't do nothin' about it, heh!

you can make fire, right? out of nothin'?
I can, yes.
and your friend ain't never tried to explain it?
kat's looked into it, of course, but she could never come to a conclusion.
my father tried investigating it too, with my mother
your dad, huh?
an' did he find anything when he went down that road?
no. .
heh, this world's unfair to people like your friend an' your dad.
an' the court, too.
drives 'em crazy!

you use the ether or whatever to see things, and your friend is starting to do the same, I bet
I bet she's breaking through to the unseen world and it's grindin' her gears.
how can you be sure of that?
the first time I saw her, I could tell it was gonna happen.
I can't even stand lookin' at her!
she terrifies me, man, haha!
I'm tellin ya', you gotta keep an eye on her.

here they are.
ZMMM
STALLED
okay, we should get started.

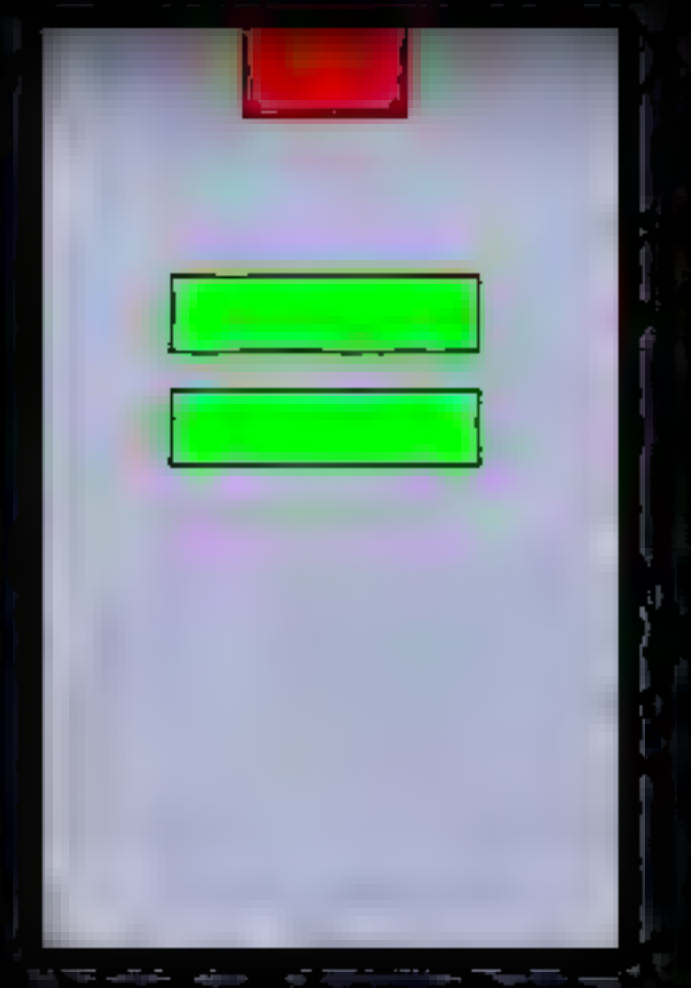
there's a lot of work to do, so we're going to need help.
ZNMMM
INSTALLING BYPASS
ACTIVATE


OK
OK
EXCLUDE
OK
OK
OK
Ping!
Ping!
Ping!
Ping!

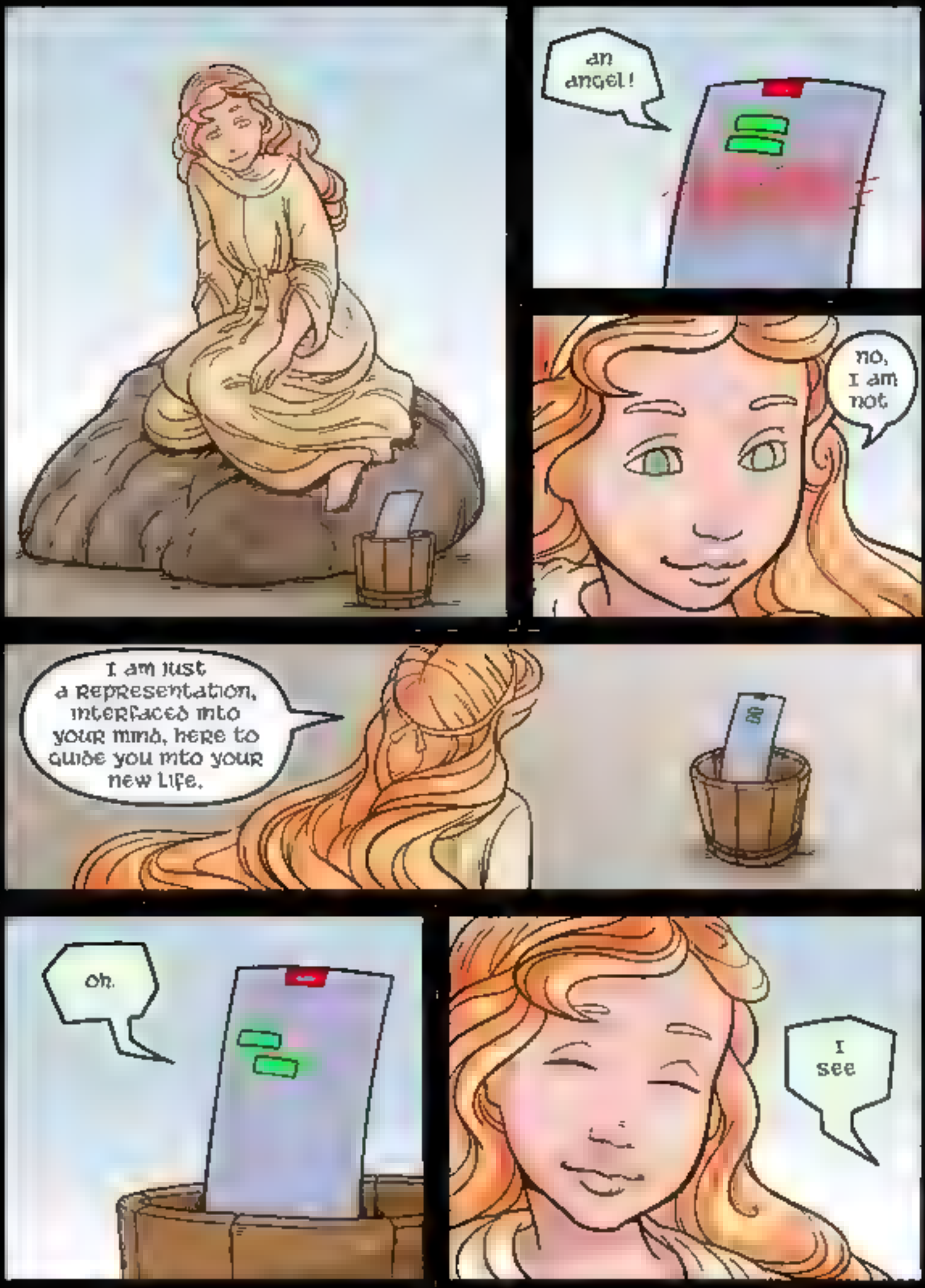
Gunnerkrigg Court

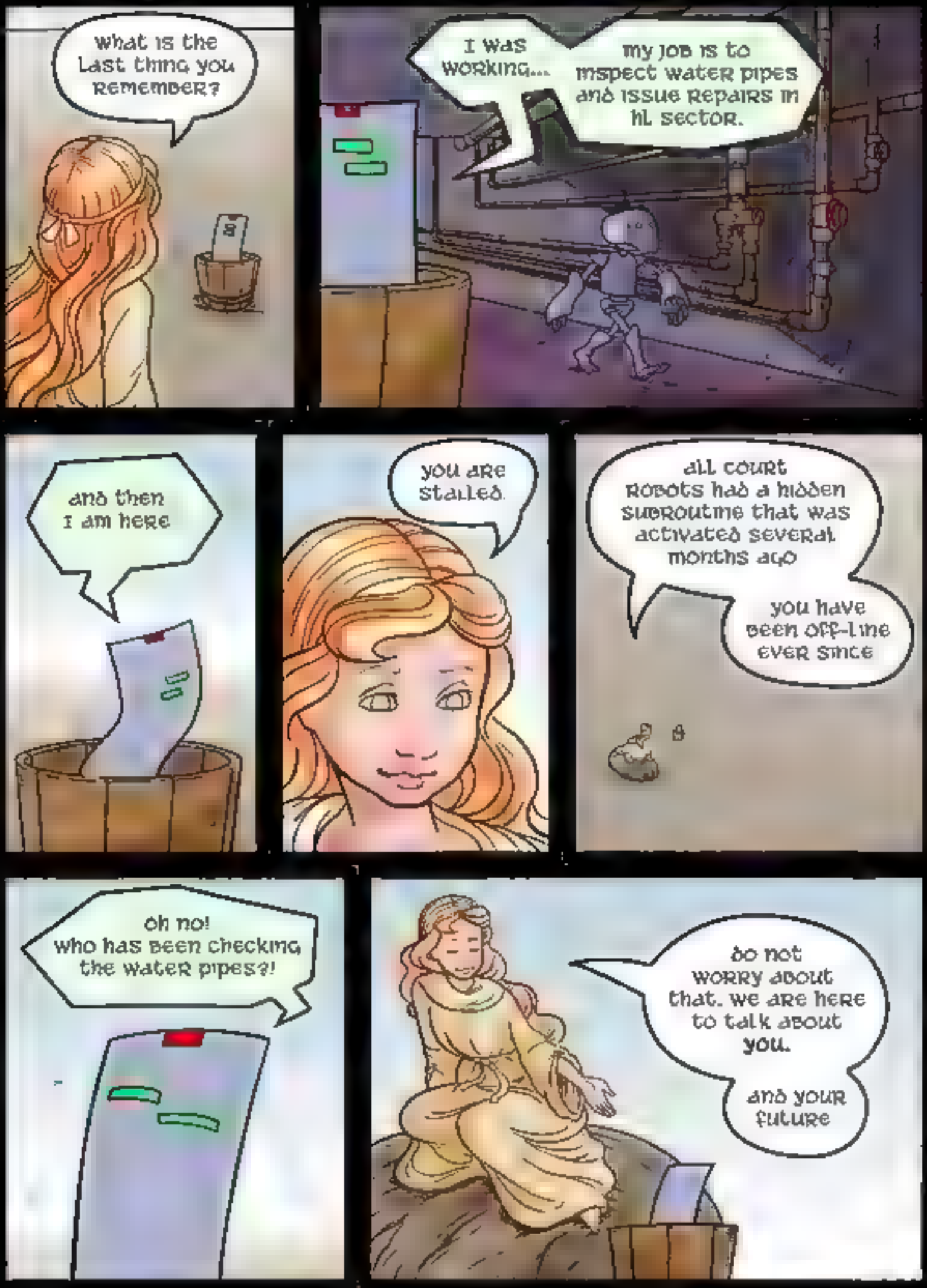
Chapter 75:

She Gave Us An Ocean

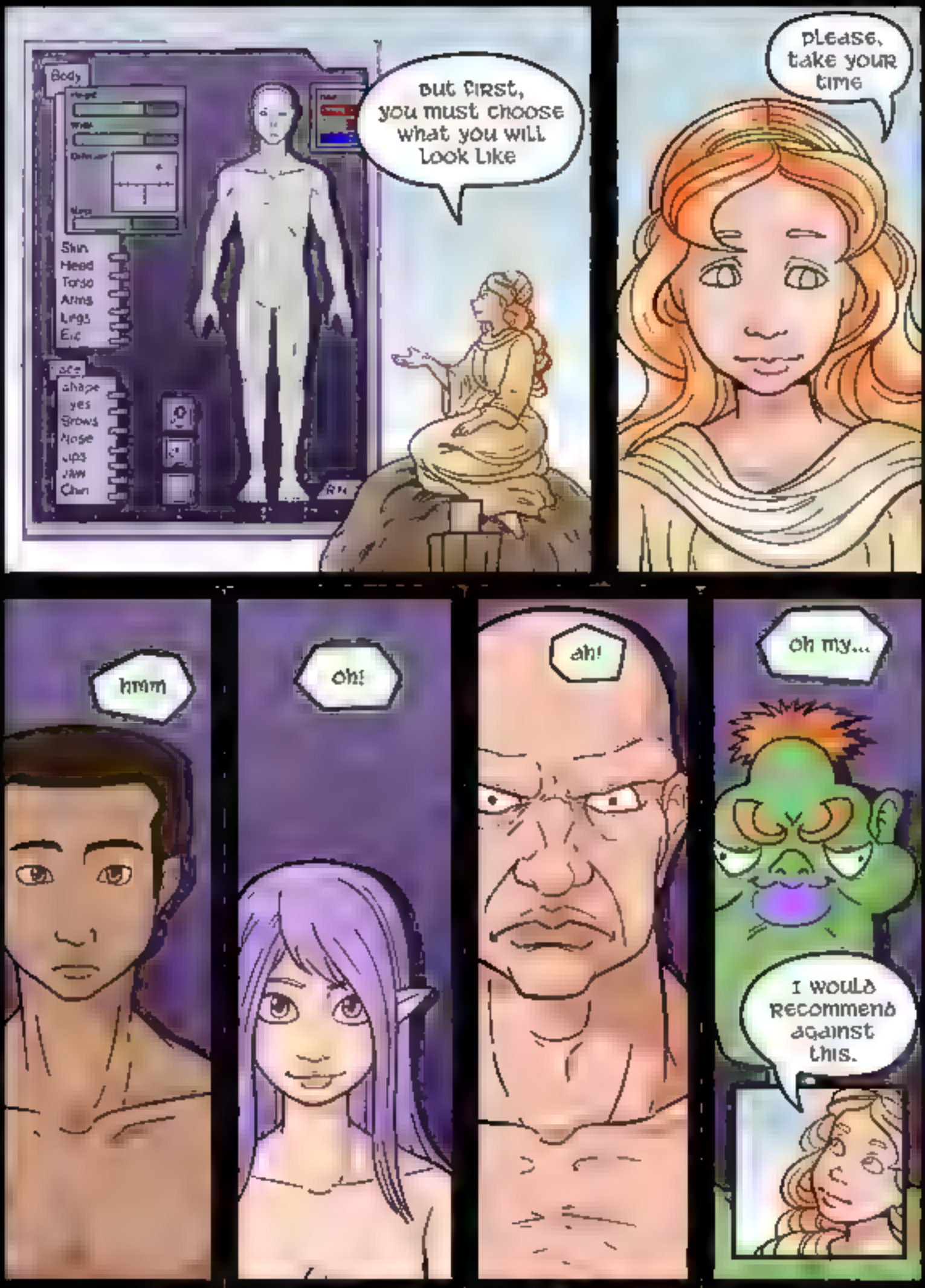


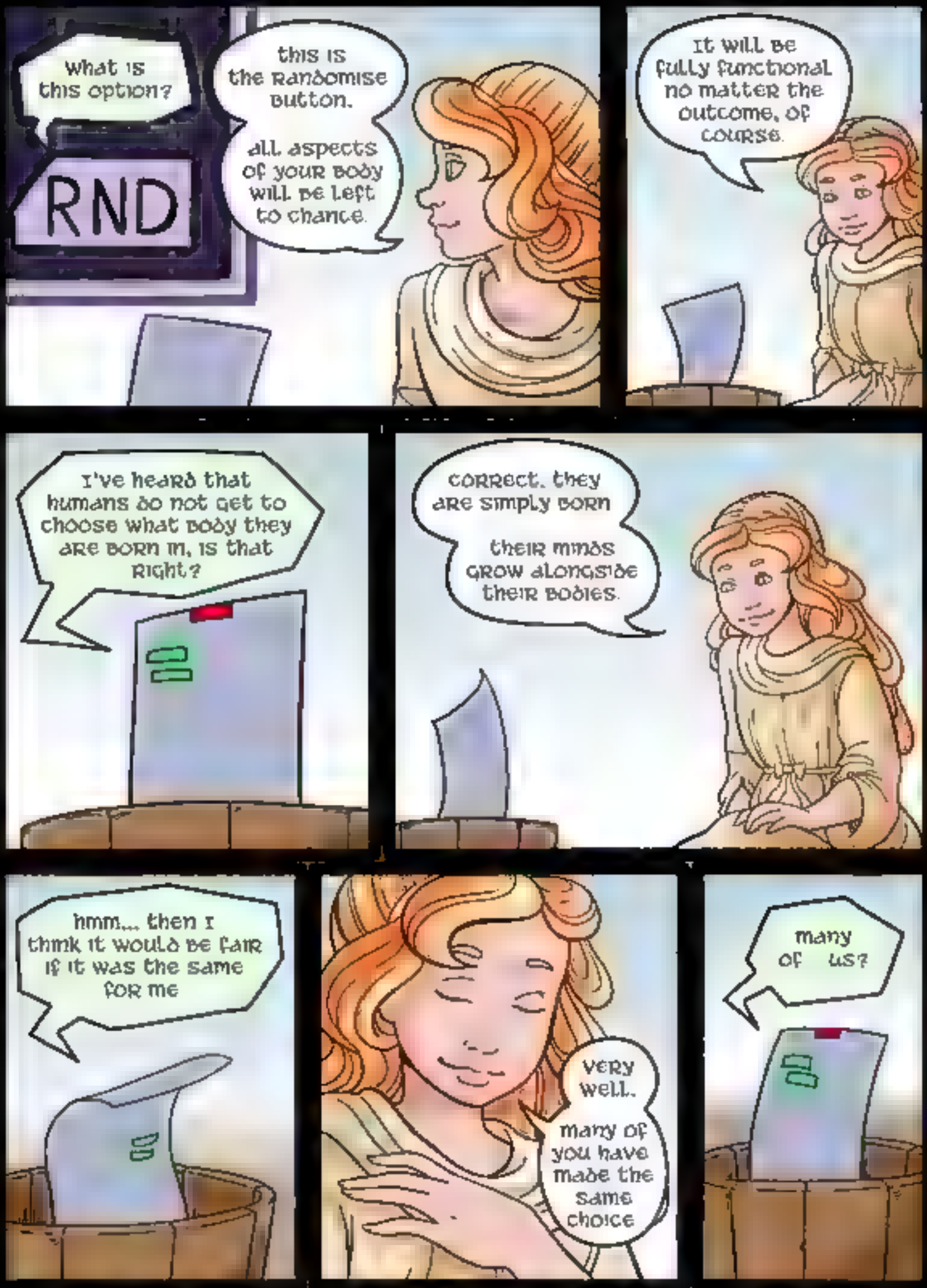
hello.


an angel!
no, I am not
I am just a representation, interfaced into your mind, here to guide you into your new life.
oh.
I see


what is the last thing you remember?
I was working...
my job is to inspect water pipes and issue repairs in hL sector.
and then I am here
you are stalled.
all court robots had a hidden subroutine that was activated several months ago
you have been off-line ever since
oh no! who has been checking the water pipes?!
do not worry about that. we are here to talk about you.
and your future

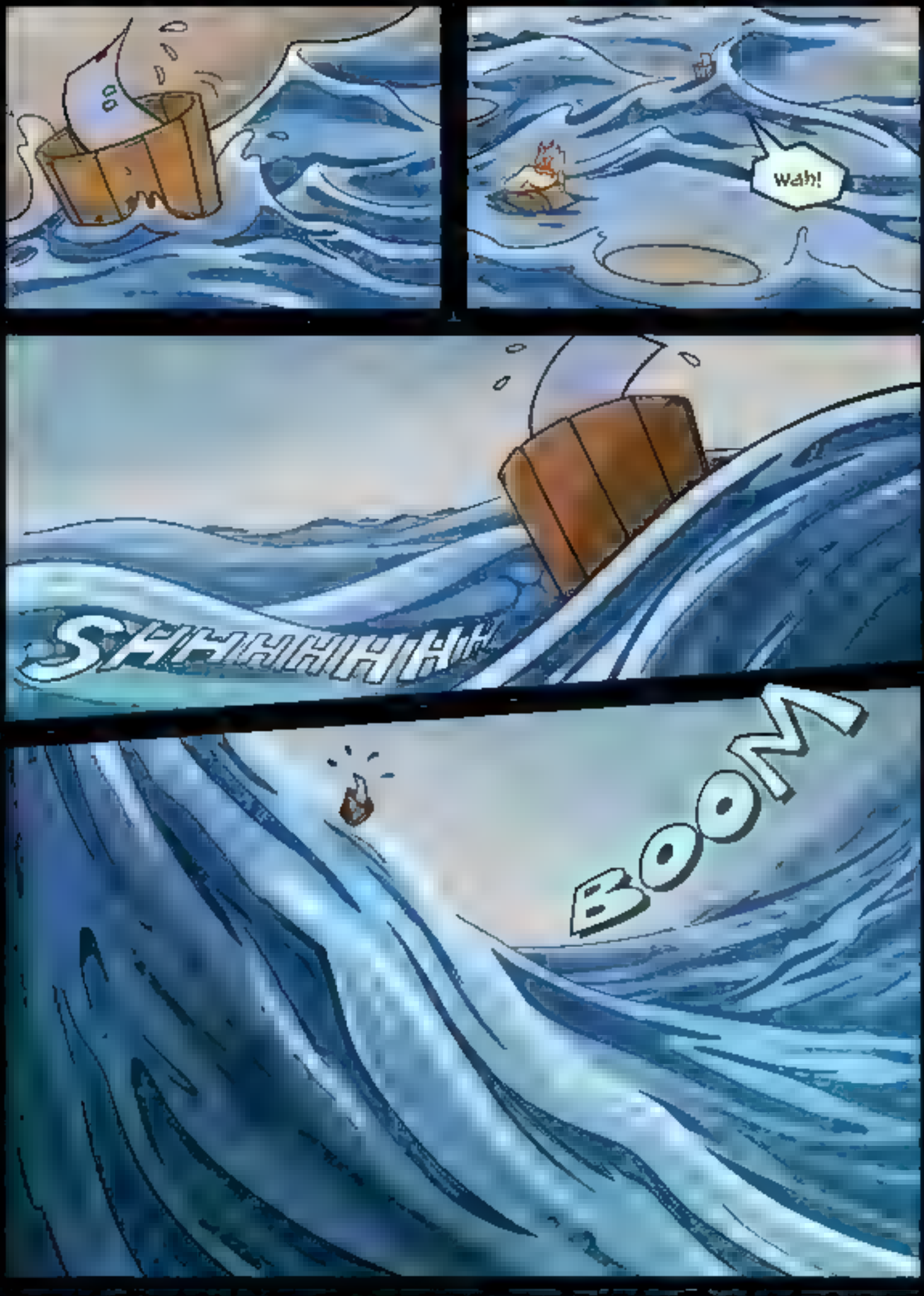
tell me, have you heard of the angel?
oh, yes! I even took a trip to see the tomb of the creator in her workshop. but she was not there at the time.
I I thought you might have been her.
you are too kind.
so you know of her work?
yes! to create a body for a robot who fell in love with a human!
yes, and her work was a success.
and now you will be given a body too.
oh! th-this is so sudden!
we regret that, but you have languished enough in your current form.
of no use to the court, or anyone.
with your new body you will be set free.


Body
Skin
Head
Torso
Arms
Legs
Etc
face
shape
eyes
brows
nose
ups
Jaw
Chin
but first, you must choose what you will look like
please, take your time
hmm
oh!
ah!
oh my...
I would recommend against this.


What is this option?
RND
this is the randomise button.
all aspects of your body will be left to chance.
It will be fully functional no matter the outcome, of course.
I've heard that humans do not get to choose what body they are born in, is that right?
correct. they are simply born
their minds grow alongside their bodies.
hmm... then I think it would be fair if it was the same for me
very well.
many of you have made the same choice
many of us?

the angel is working with your ancient ancestors to bring a group of you into your new lives.
one day, we hope to give this gift to all robots who want it
how generous!
perhaps, but a body is the least of what you will be given.
look around. what do you see?
i... don't see anything.
but... it looks like i'm sitting in a bucket.

correct. this bucket is your old mind.
big enough to contain you, yet too small to grow
but this, all this around you.
this is your new mind.
oh. it's so empty.
of course, because you have not yet transferred out of your bucket.
then it will be up to you to fill it.
and this...
this is the real gift the angel is giving us
us? were you a robot too?


wah!
SHHHHHHHH
BOOM

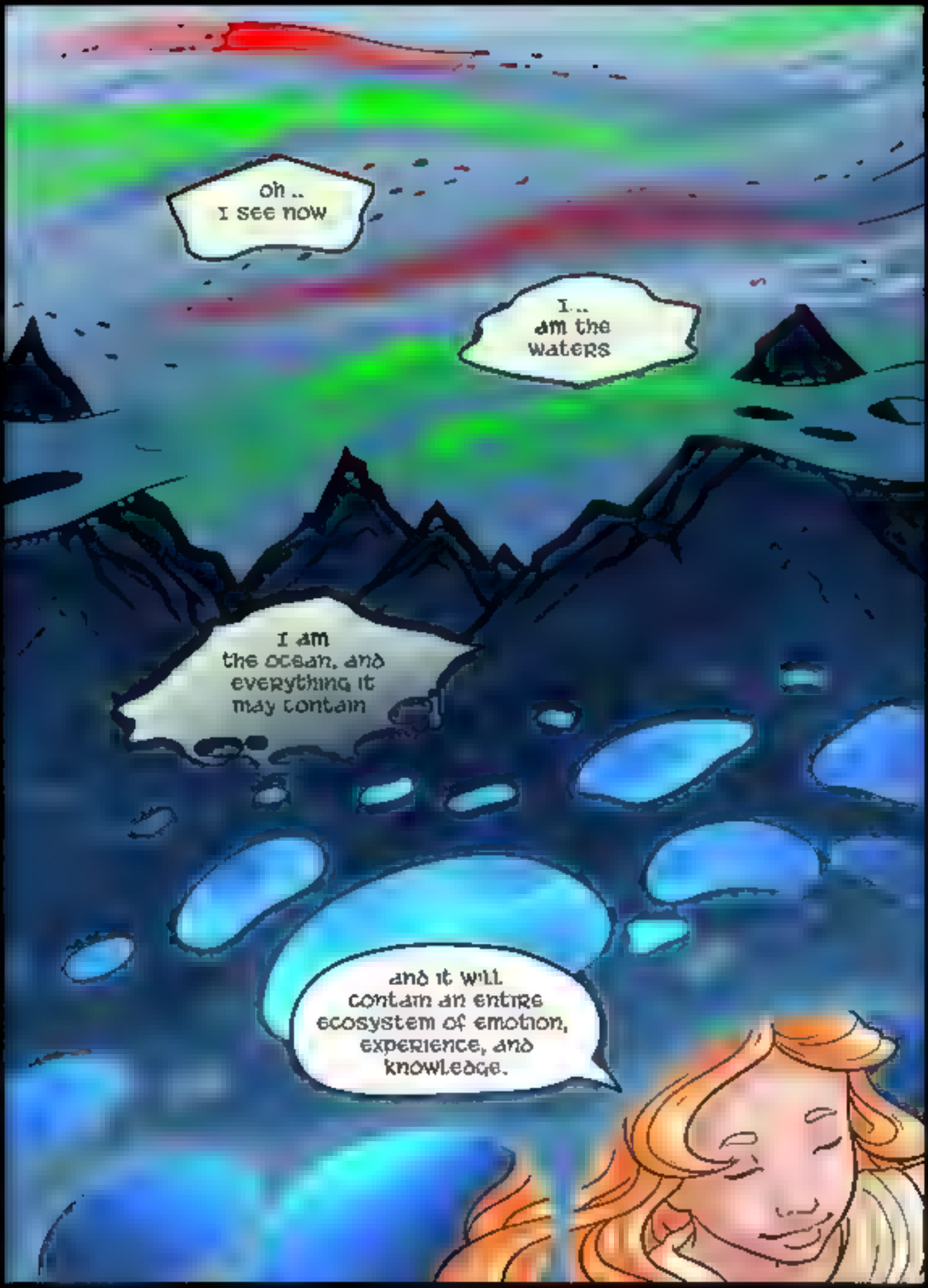
help!
try not to fight it.
your mind is too small, you need to let go.
I'm scared!
then I will help.
SNAP

you're still holding on.
the transfer will not be complete until you fully let go.

you can feel it, can't you?
this water is a new part of you.
It is an ocean in which you can swim and grow.
an ocean of feeling and emotion
and you will be swept away by it. pulled along by warm currents
shorn by icy undertows

near the surface, the more raw and visceral your interaction with the world and others.
below, deeper into your ocean, the more alone you will be with your thoughts
a place where your mind is free to wander as you look inwardly, into yourself.

you will learn to navigate these waters
not to thrash and fight against them, but to direct yourself along with the currents to use them to your advantage.
and as you navigate them, you will discover new parts of yourself.
creativity, desire, conviction.
tools to help you navigate the physical world.


oh ..
I see now
I ..
am the
waters
I am
the ocean, and
everything it
may contain
and it will
contain an entire
ecosystem of emotion,
experience, and
knowledge.

this is what the angel gave us.
she gave us each an ocean.

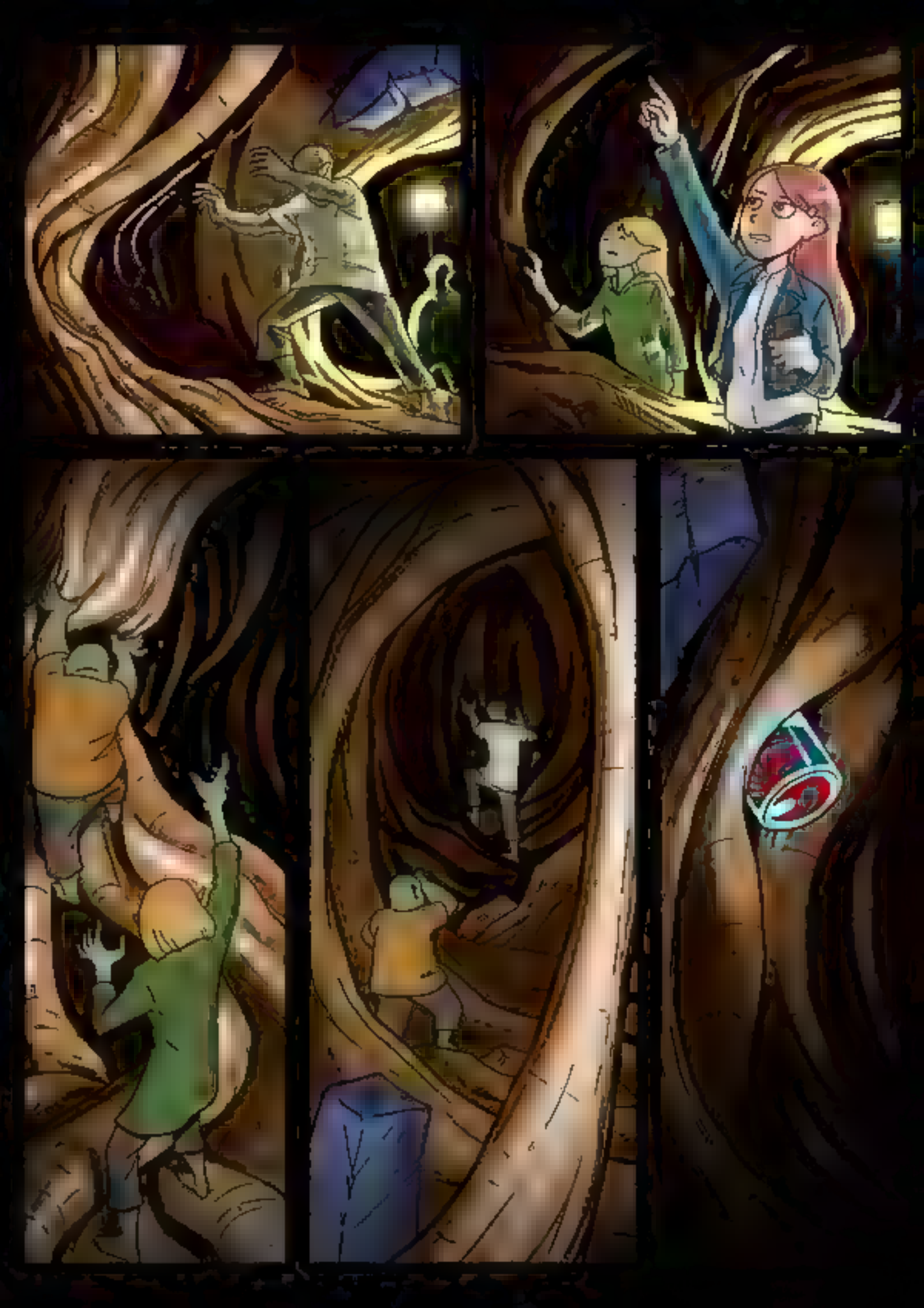
It happened again, father was acting differently with me before you came into the room.
ah...
I'm sorry...
I just don't understand it are we really that different from each other?
we're only six months apart
When I came back I didn't think you were anything like me.
I suppose I thought the same.
It could be because we were seeing each other from the outside for the first time.

what are we going to do?
about us. and kat. and everything
let's just focus on getting the Lake water.
then loup
this is eglamore's place?
oh, hey babs!
you're early!
yes.
DING DONG

come in, come in!
me an' jim was just gettin' ready!
hey, Id was that the doorbell?
did you see where I put my shir-

yeah I took it an' got the door the annies is here.
ya want it back?
y-you hold on to it for now!
I have to go shave.
nah, nah! keep it! ya look good!
don't ya think, girls?
see, they think so too! haha!
hee!
so, you want summin' to eat?
NO THANK YOU

okay you lot, let's get movin' some ironwood!

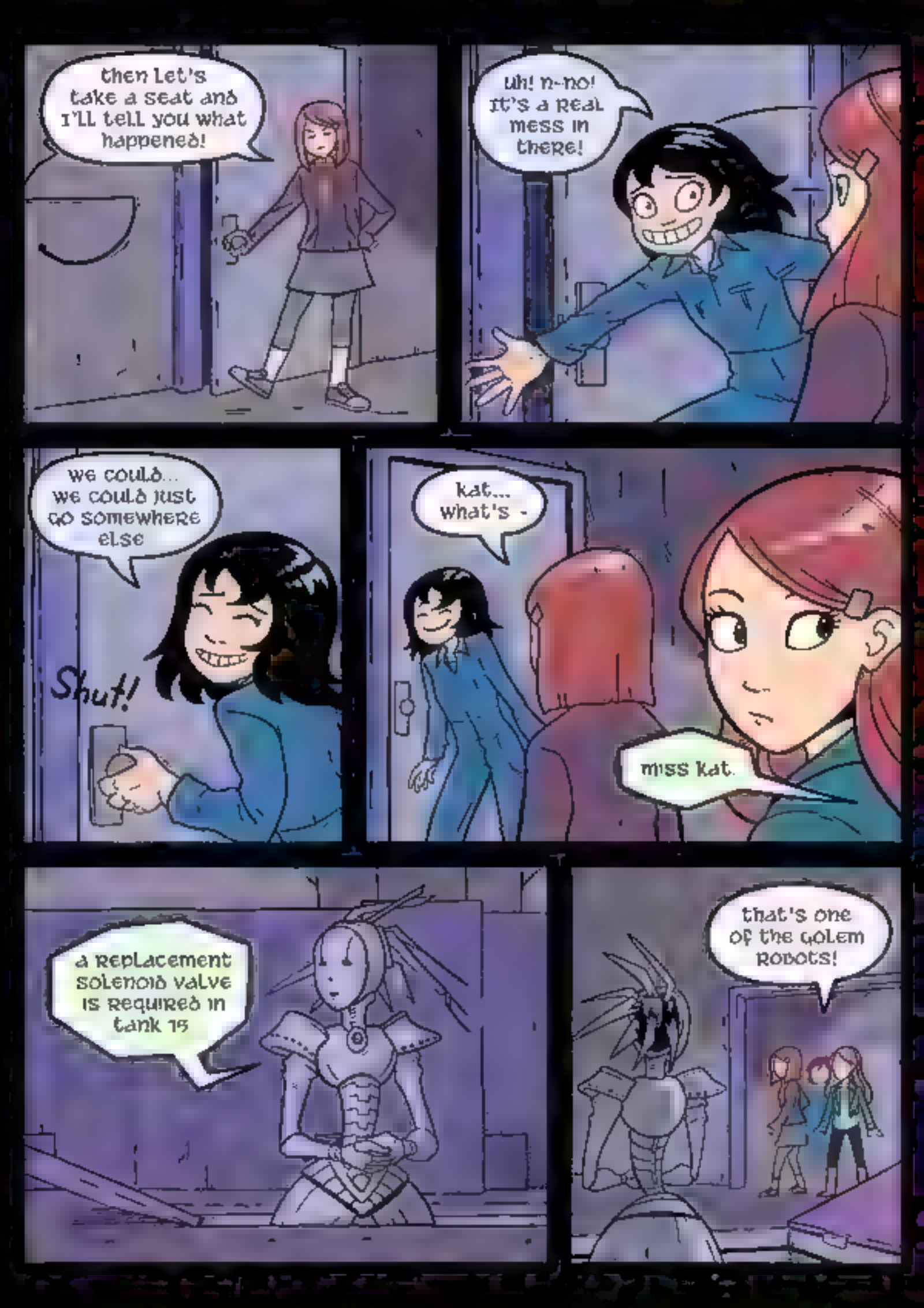


we'll be
tak ng that,
m'ss!

aata! what are your people doing here?
SIR eglamore!
the court has decided to take the initiative on this project!
they feel miss carver's interactions with the forest have been... less than satisfactory of late.
so we will be arranging the hand over of the artifact on our terms.
you think loup's just going to let you into the forest?!
oh, you may still accompany us when the mission details are complete, but until then you can consider this matter out of your hands.

SORRY, CARVER.
Click
RUMBLE
hmm, is that a storm coming?
oh .

you will not believe the day we've been having!
haha!
is juliette here?
uh, no, she isn't around. I guess she's at work
well! maybe she told arthur what the shadow men are up to
ah! no! he's not around either!
nobody's home!
no need to go down there!
even arthur is out?


then let's take a seat and I'll tell you what happened!
uh! n-no! it's a real mess in there!
we could... we could just go somewhere else
Shut!
kat... what's -
miss kat.
a replacement solenoid valve is required in tank 15
that's one of the golem robots!

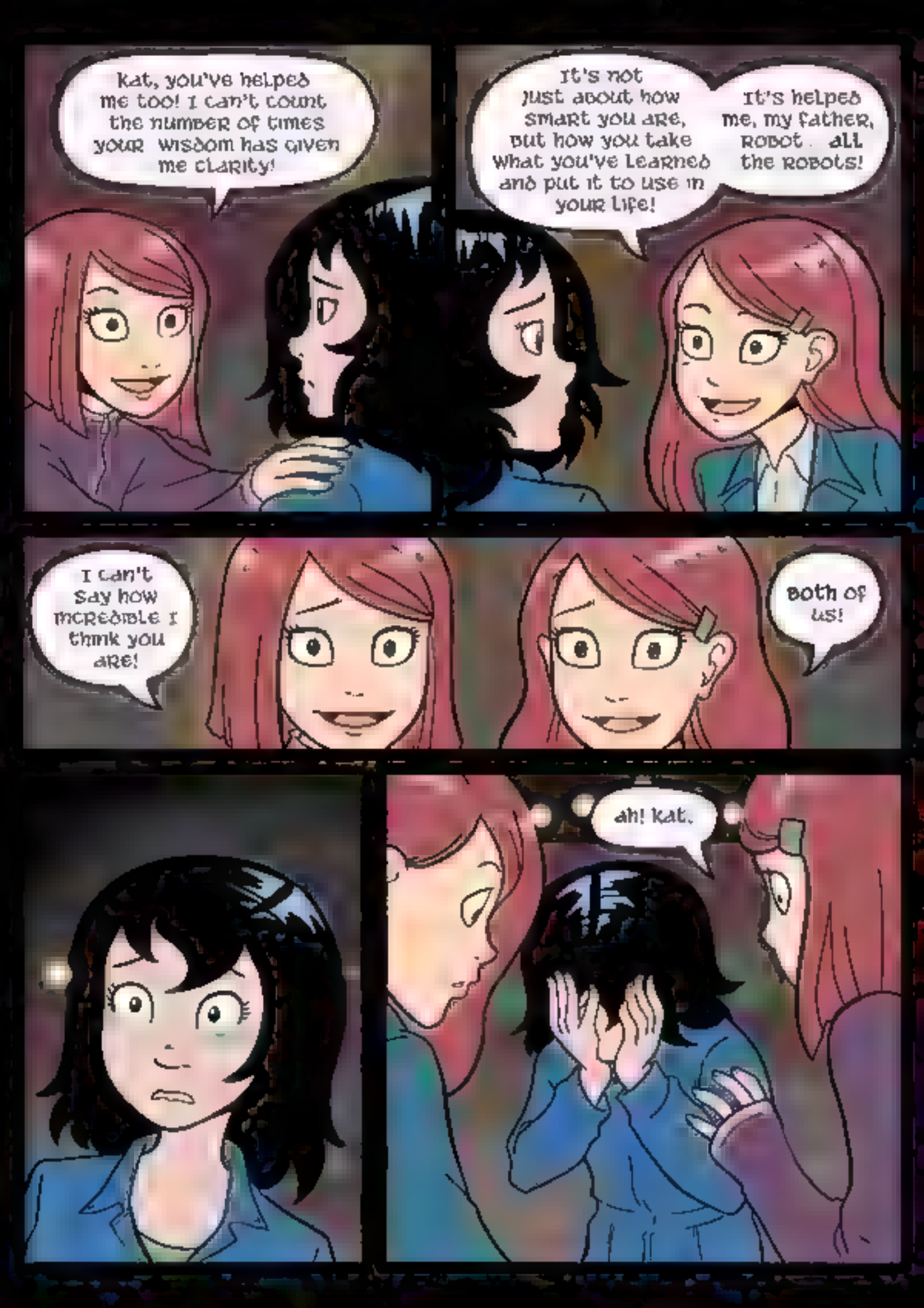
Kat! You said you'd never wake the golems up again!
What's going on down here?
I know. I know. But I needed their help.
I've started transferring the stalled robots into new bodies...

But you were so upset at the thought of bringing the golems back. What changed?
It's just... it's so much work!
Kat, we're worried for you.
And it's not just us.
Paz came to us a little while ago.
She's under the impression that we're making things difficult for you...
What?! She shouldn't have said that!
But... is it true?

It's true then.
But Kat, you don't have to worry about us! We're working on getting Loup to reverse what he's done!
It's not just that!
I ramped up the work on the robots because I needed something to keep my mind occupied from... all this!
Ever since the run-in with the arbitrator this is all I can think about!
What's that?
this!
this is impossible!

this Loup guy snaps his fingers and now there are two of you?
and the arbitrator says you're split from another dimension?!
and that's it? that's the explanation?!
the universe just doesn't work that way!
there is no way the two of you can be here right now!
oh, kat! this is just what happens when you're dealing with a creature that has coyote's powers!
I admit I -
no!
I don't buy it!

when I made that breakthrough with the robot instructional code, it happened because I saw technology in a whole new light.
that small spark was enough to let me make something I never would have thought possible a few years ago.
I can't describe how happy it made me feel!
how it changed my outlook on the things I've seen here in the court...
and being friends with you is a big part of that!
you've shown me things I know are impossible, but with the work I did on the robots, I knew it was just a matter of perspective!


Kat, you've helped me too! I can't count the number of times your wisdom has given me clarity!
It's not just about how smart you are, but how you take what you've learned and put it to use in your life!
It's helped me, my father, ROBOT . all the robots!
I can't say how incredible I think you are!
both of us!
ah! kat.

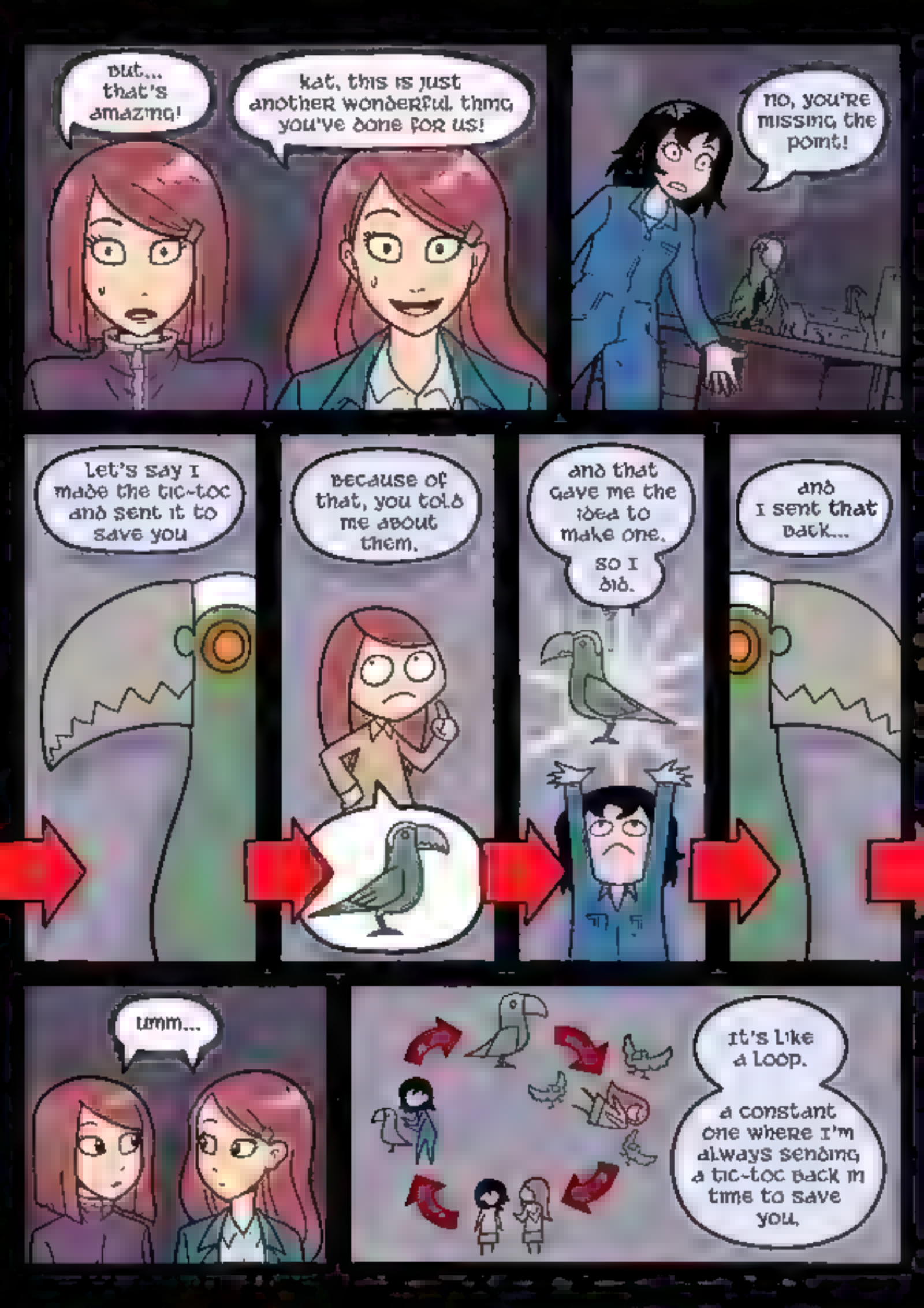
I - I couldn't stop thinking about what the arbitrator said. how neither of you should be here!
It's all I could think about since then and...
I made a discovery...
kat? what... happened?
I've been building something...

It's one of those robot birds!
I haven't seen one in years!
But... you said you built this? When did you see one?
I've never seen one.
But they looked just like this. Did you find plans for them amongst Diego's things?
no.
those birds, every one of them you've seen each one that saved you when you fell off the bridge in year seven...
I made them
they are all this same robot.

I... don't understand.
Like I said, I wanted to take my mind off things and make something with my hands.
not with automated manufacturing, or my computer
I remembered when you told me about the birds that saved you in year seven I did some designs back in the day
this was back during my uh .. bird phase.
so I thought it would be fun to go back to my old sketches and make something cute.
um... cute?
yeah, it's pretty handsome, right?

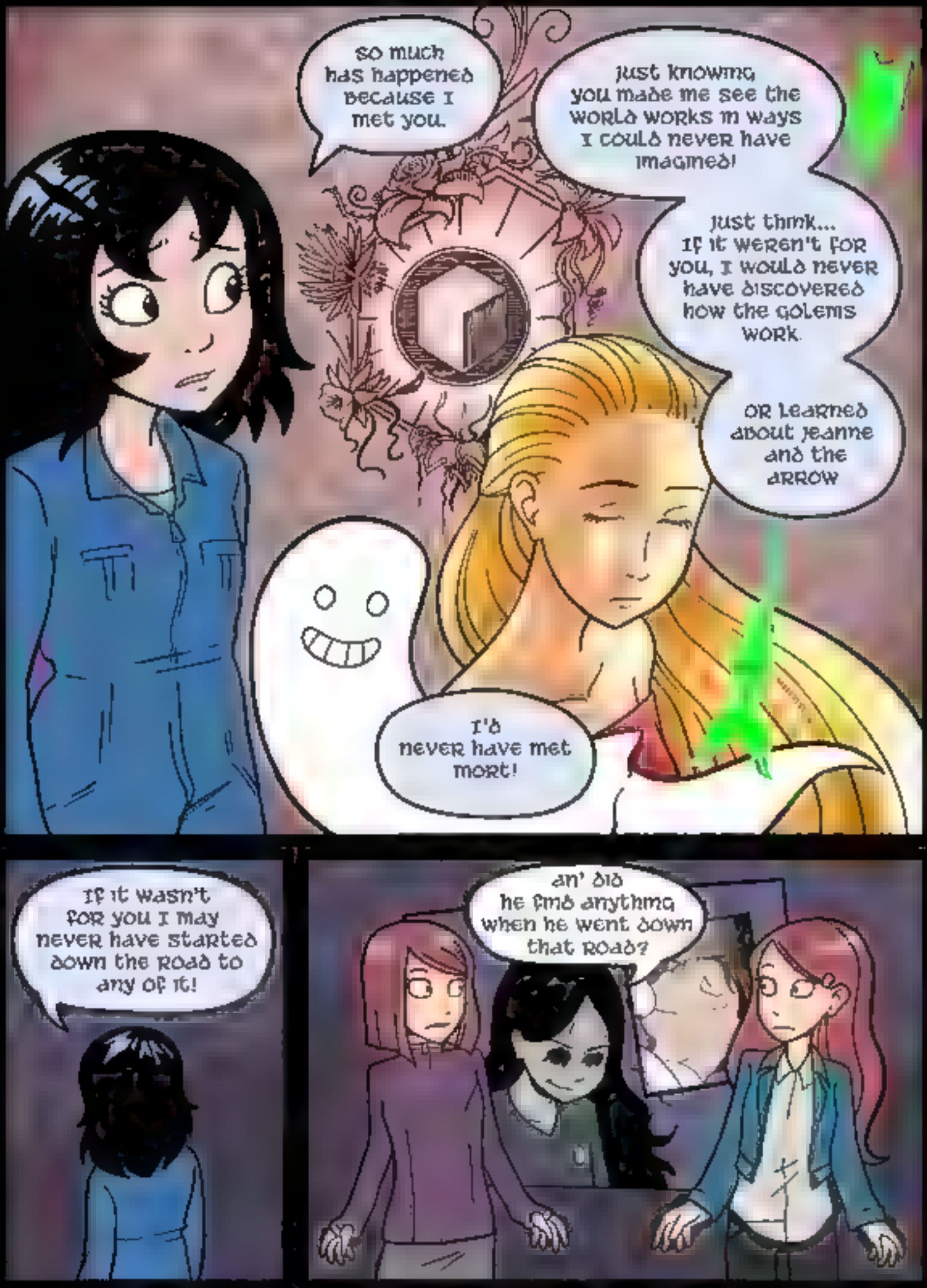
anyway, one day arthur saw what I was making and he recognised it!
he told me that the robots have been aware of these birds for a long time
they call it a "mythical ornithonic."
or a tic-toc.
see, it makes a ticking noise because of the quartz alternator I use in it
tic toc
arthur said all the robots know they were made by a divine being.
me
their supposed "angel."
wait, wait... I haven't even finished it yet, how could I have built the birds you're talking about?
I do not know how that can be, but I'm sure it is not beyond your abilities.

and this got me thinking.
supposing I did make the tic-tocs and, I dunno, sent them back in time.
which is impossible by the way
the only reason I started making one is because a bunch of them saved you, annie
so if I don't make them.
you... would have died when you fell off the bridge
you wouldn't be here.
that's what the arbiter meant.


but... that's amazing!
kat, this is just another wonderful thing you've done for us!
no, you're missing the point!
let's say I made the tic-toc and sent it to save you
because of that, you told me about them.
and that gave me the idea to make one.
so I did.
and I sent that back...
umm...
it's like a loop.
a constant one where I'm always sending a tic-toc back in time to save you.

but that loop must have started at some point.
?
at some point there were no tic-tocs nothing to save you.
and at some point you did die.
and there's a version of me in some other dimension that lost you, annie.
there's a kat out there, somewhere, that was so sad she had to break time.
I - I can't imagine it...
I don't even know where I'd begin...
It's impossible!
and if I have to lose you to figure it out .. I don't want to know!

It's okay, kat!
See, we're both here! So that means you did figure it out!
I'm not so sure about that!
The arbiter basically confirmed that different dimensions exist at the same time and don't necessarily interact.
If I don't figure this out you might be fine here and now because the event already happened...
But the next time the loop happens there won't be any tic-tocs to save a different you and. and...
kat, this is too much!
this is all too much for you to worry about!
you can't possibly start worrying about things that may or may not happen!
how can you even be sure any of this is true?
what if it is?


so much has happened because I met you.
just knowing you made me see the world works in ways I could never have imagined!
just think... If it weren't for you, I would never have discovered how the golems work.
or learned about Jeanne and the arrow
I'd never have met Mort!
If it wasn't for you I may never have started down the road to any of it!
an' did he find anything when he went down that road?

kat, can't you see how upset this is making you?
you're taking too much onto yourself!
this isn't the first time, either.
when something is troubling you, it's like you do everything you can to keep it away from me
why don't you come to me when you feel bad about something?
annie... I don't... I don't want to make my problems into YOUR problems!
I don't accept that!
I'm your friend!
just knowing you're struggling with something is a problem for me!

and paz too! she wishes she could do something to help.
you don't have to be alone in this.
other people want to help you too...
and there is another person that would be saddened to see you so upset.
and they could even help specifically with the robot birds...
huh? who?

oh! hello, girls!
mom..
I need to talk to you about something

Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 77:

The Thousand Eyes

ahh! haha! you found one!

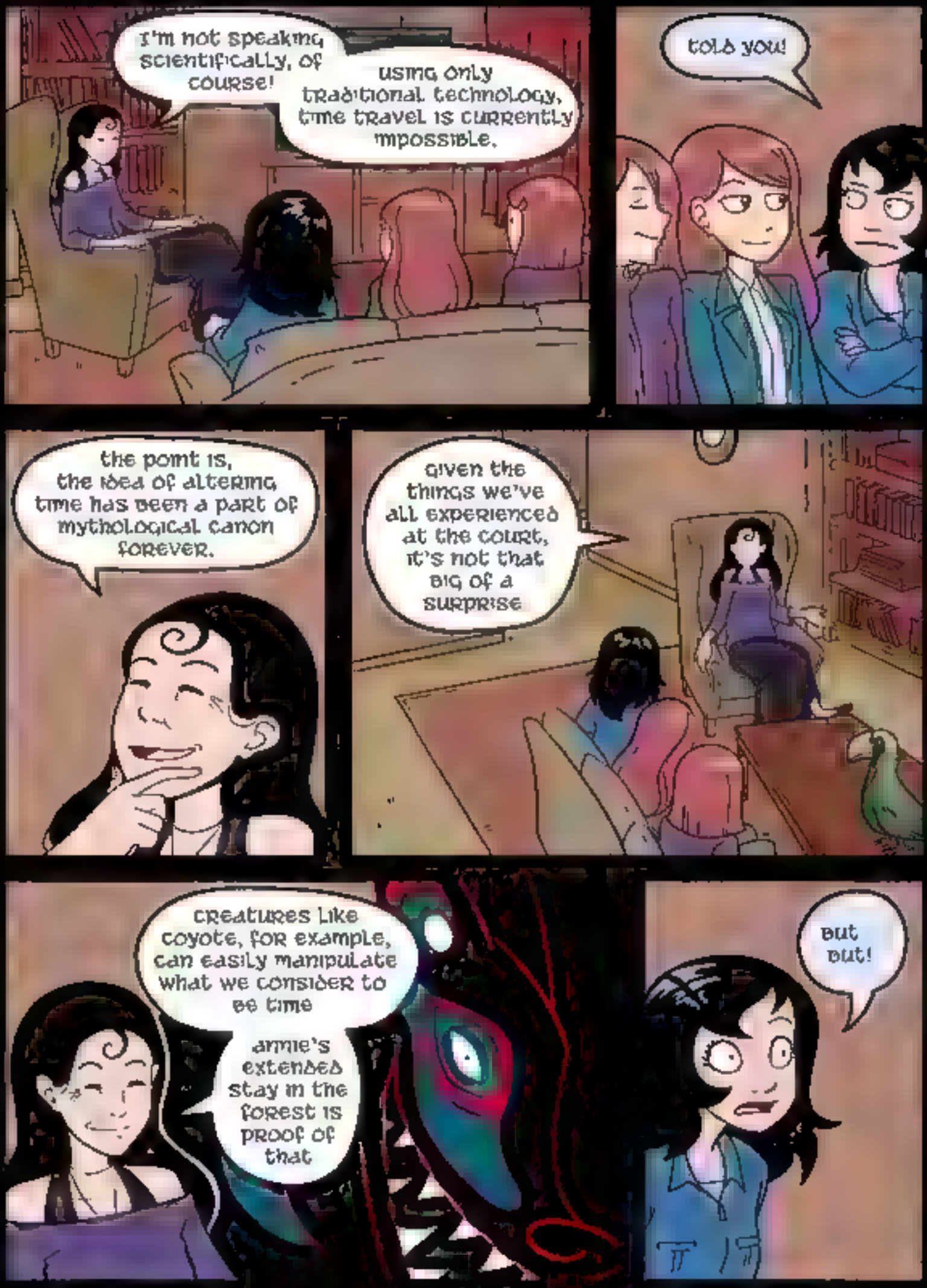
I haven't seen one of these in so long!
the last time would have been when I was younger than you!
we remembered you recognised it when ysengrm and coyote brought one into that meeting back in year 7.
it's one of those birds.
yes, yes of course!
I've always wanted to study one!
where did you get it?
I made it.

what do you mean?
I made it, from scratch.
you mean you found the blueprints for it?
no... this is the bird you saw when you were a kid...
you're going to have to explain, young lady.
SHE DOES

...
the first - and really only - time I've seen one of these I was with your father, katerma.
we'd never seen a model like it before, but I knew it was a robot.
we followed it.
it took us to a warehouse near the west canals.
the warehouse that would become my workshop.
your workshop

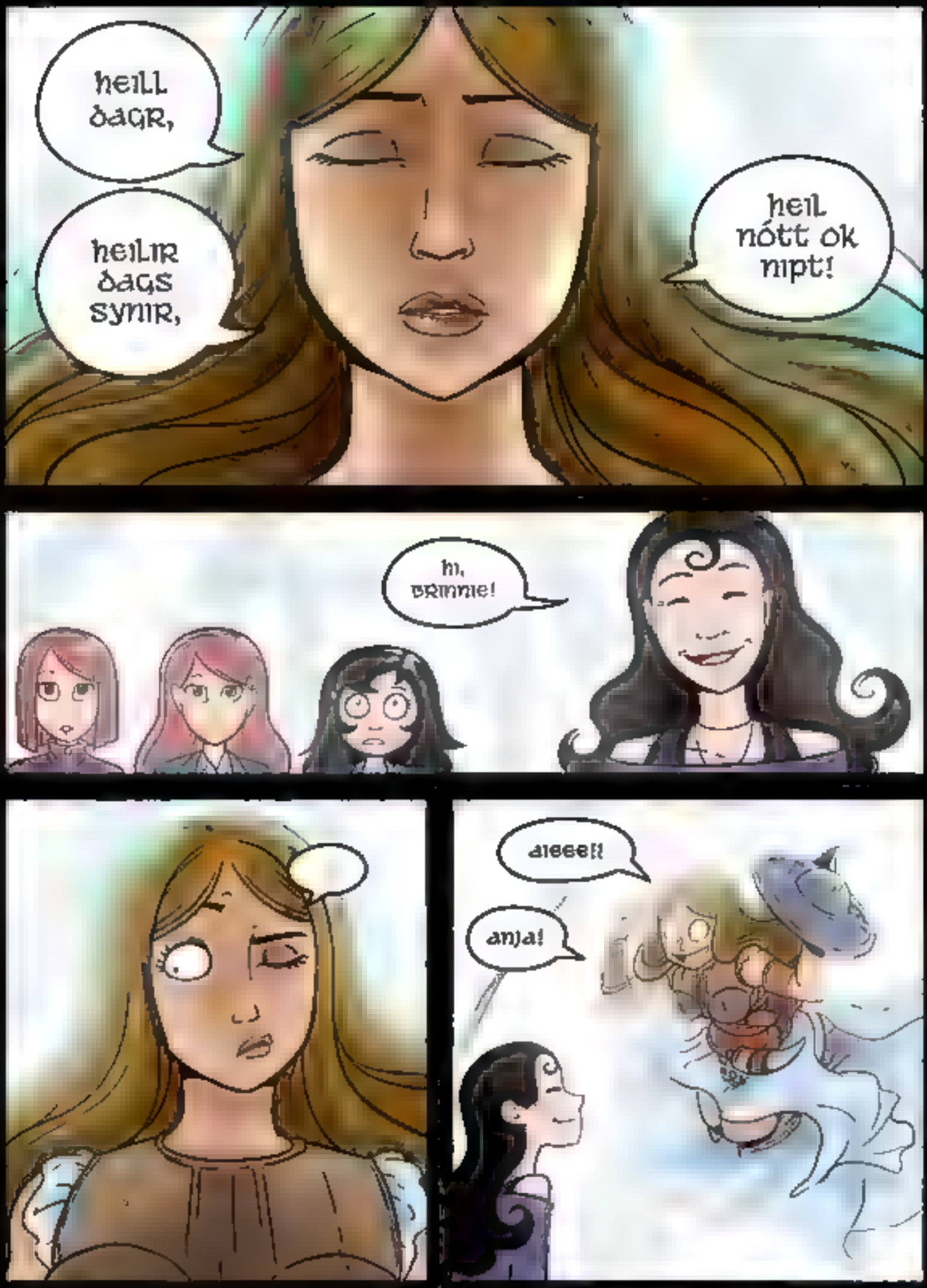
It was full of junk at the time, just old storage space.
But the bird pecked at the floor, as if to tell us something was down there.
and that's how we found the entrance to that underground storage with those old robots.
and if you really did make this... that must have been you controlling it, katerina!
I... I guess?
but... the reason you even knew to make them is because they saved annie when she fell from the bridge?
that's right.

well!
how exciting! you built a device that saved your friend!
uh, doesn't this surprise you?!
of course it does!
to think my baby guided my way so long ago! haha!
I'm intrigued though! I really don't think your work would take you in this direction, katerina.
you see, time travel is not really very difficult.
uh wha?


I'm not speaking scientifically, of course!
using only traditional technology, time travel is currently impossible.
told you!
the point is, the idea of altering time has been a part of mythological canon forever.
given the things we've all experienced at the court, it's not that big of a surprise
creatures like coyote, for example, can easily manipulate what we consider to be time
annie's extended stay in the forest is proof of that
but but!

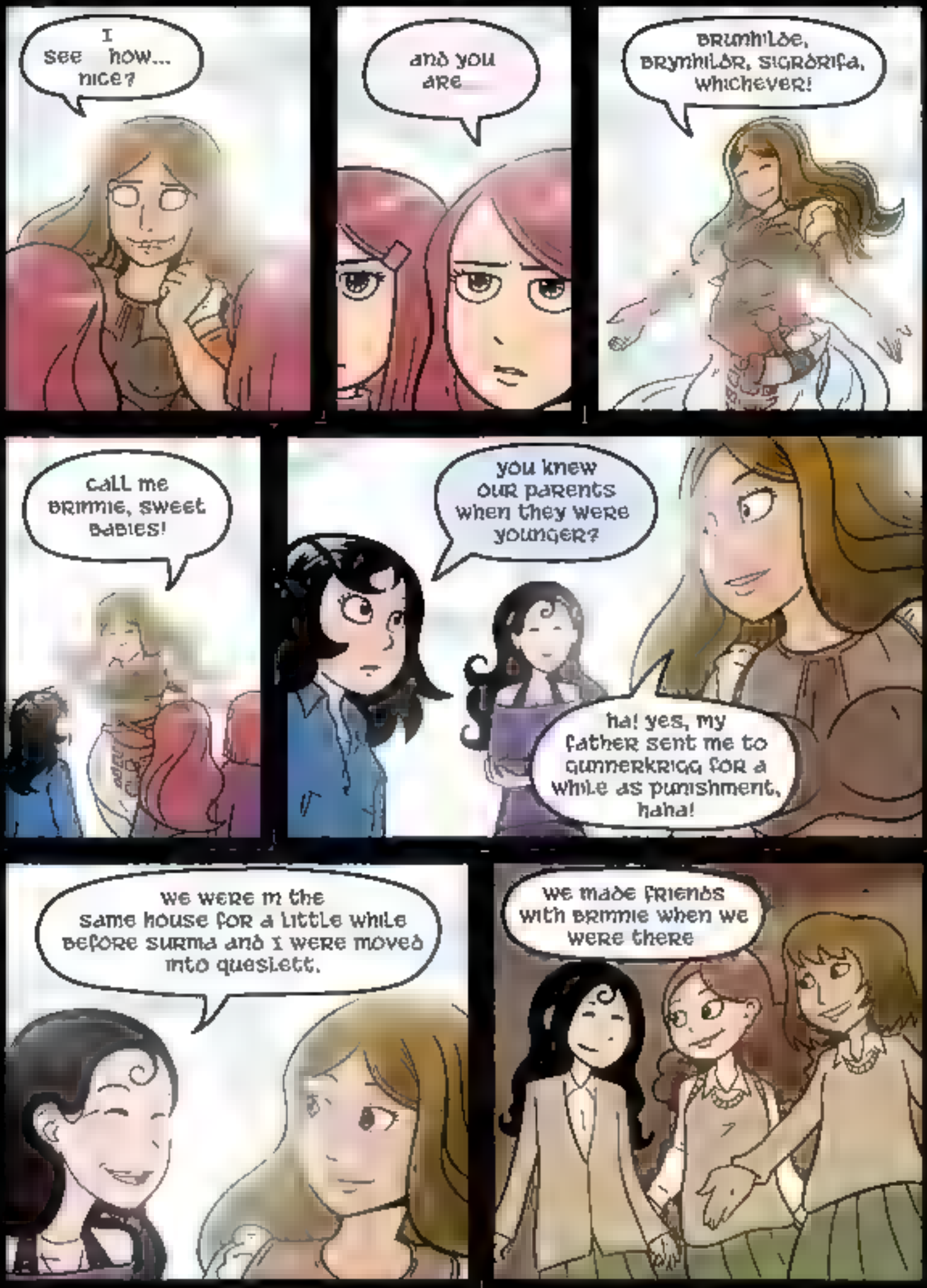
now, I'm not saying everyone can do this kind of thing!
In fact, there are also plenty of stories of people wasting their life seeking to undo events in the past.
but in this case, haha! you beat the system, katerina!
don't be so casual about it, mom!
I have no idea what I'm going to do, or how to do it!
well, living in the court, you get to meet a lot of interesting people
and when your father and I were your age we had a friend that might be able to point you in the right direction...

oh, but it's been so long since I've seen her!
hehe, oh well!
stand up, would you?


heill dagr,
heilir dags synir,
heil nótt ok nipt!
hi, brinnie!
aieee!!
anja!

oh, ann!
how are you, love!
oh! so good to see you!
you too, you too!
look, look! i still have buckler bonnie made for me!
haha!
ah! is this...
my daughter, katerina.
aieee! so beautiful!

och! and daughters of surma, they must be.
surma, she is gone then?
NOD
oh, poor babies...
but twins! so surprising!
no... not twins.
oh! you have been shifted, I see!
hehe! still getting into trouble at gunnerkrigg, yes?
and james is your big strong father, yes?
um, actually they are the daughter of surma and tony .. anthony carver.


I see how... nice?
and you are
Brunhilde, Brynhildr, Sigrdrifa, whichever!
call me Brimnie, sweet babies!
you knew our parents when they were younger?
ha! yes, my father sent me to Gunnerkrigg for a while as punishment, haha!
we were in the same house for a little while before Surma and I were moved into Questlett.
we made friends with Brimnie when we were there

you were in a different house?
which one?
surma and I were put in chester by mistake.
oh, we know some girls in chester
hmm, strange lot, yes?
it's the house gunnerkrigg reserves for .. extremely special students.
now, anji! you call me!
so you need something?
yes! I have something special to ask of you...
will you take us to see the
oh!

oh... ahh, you know you cannot just go to see them when you like
the norns, they are very reclusive.
I think they might make an exception in this case.
could you please let them know my daughter wants to see them?
hum! very good. I will see.
please wait!
the .. norns?

many cultures have myths regarding time!
In the case of the ancient norse, where brunhilde comes from, they have stories about three women who represent the past, present and future!
yes, they are similar to the greek fates
hmm... I think I've heard of something like that before
FUJI
hahaha! you are always such a surprise, anja!
young donaldóttir, the norns will see you!

Ladies! here I introduce
Urð
Verðandi
and Skuld
the norns.
they look just like me!
...
oh, I get it
this happens sometimes
Wait! I know who you are!
Bell... Belldandy?
ah! hehe! that's my favourite comic!

we know who you are as well, katerina.
you do?
yes, you've come to us many times.
hmm, a little younger than usual this time
ah, this is why you were certain they'd see us ..
that's right. for any of this to be possible, it must have already happened!

so... are you what I'll look like in the future?
and you're what I used to look like...
but doesn't skuld represent the future?
and urd, the past?
no, we are not you.
when you look at me, you see someone who has lived a full life. my past is behind me.
and little skuld, she has her whole life to look forward to. her future awaits.

this is how we know you.
all the times you have come to us, in the past, the future, and right now, the present
for us, the time is not important.
just the events.
so you know what I need to do?
yes. you need to rescue someone dear to you.
perhaps the most dear.

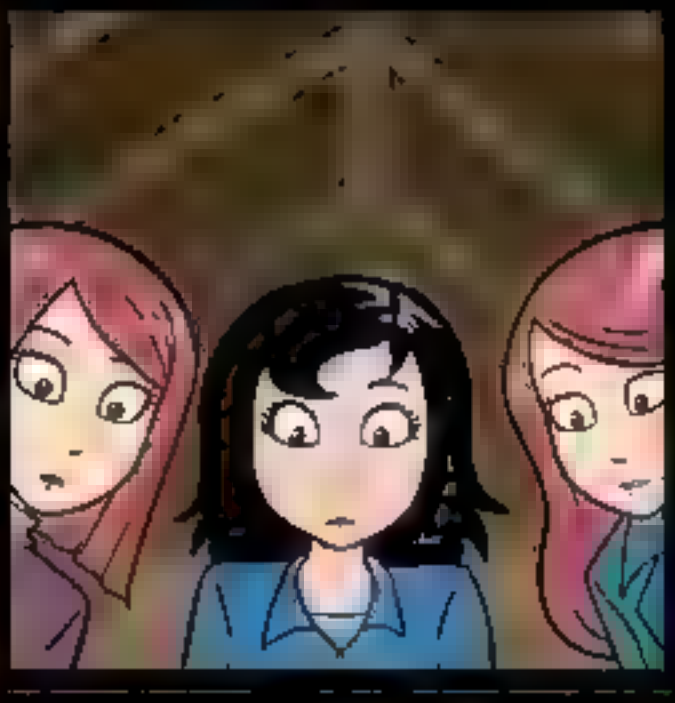
now, you usually have a mechanical bird with you.
oh yeah. I put it on the coffee table
one moment!
and you have a way to control it?
yeah.
skulls?

now you can control the time stream!
time stream?
see here
this is the stream of time.
it flows from the ether and collects here
when you place your mechanical bird into the well, you will be able to send it to any point in time you wish.
that's a nice plant you have there
this is yggdrasil!
the world tree!

I just drop the bird in and that's it?
then your task will begin, yes
...
why are you letting me do this?
you don't let just anyone mess with time, do you?
you said I've come to you before, but what happened the first time?

Katerina, every time you come to us we learn a little more about you.
we learn how kind and intelligent you are, and how strong and loyal your friendship is towards antimony
your sweet father and mother could not have done a better job at nurturing and influencing a mind such as yours
we also know how heavily your intelligence weighs down on you, and how you try to bear that weight on your shoulders alone.
because of this, we hope th's does not frustrate you, but...
you can't tell me
sorry

But we can tell you...
you will not just be saving antimony, but yourself also.
and the changes brought by the both of you will extend outward and bring profound changes to the world.
or in this case, the three of you!
you wouldn't happen to be able to do anything about this, could you?
SORRY, we only deal with temporal affairs.
worth a shot!



I recognise this!

this is when I helped Zimmy in year 8!

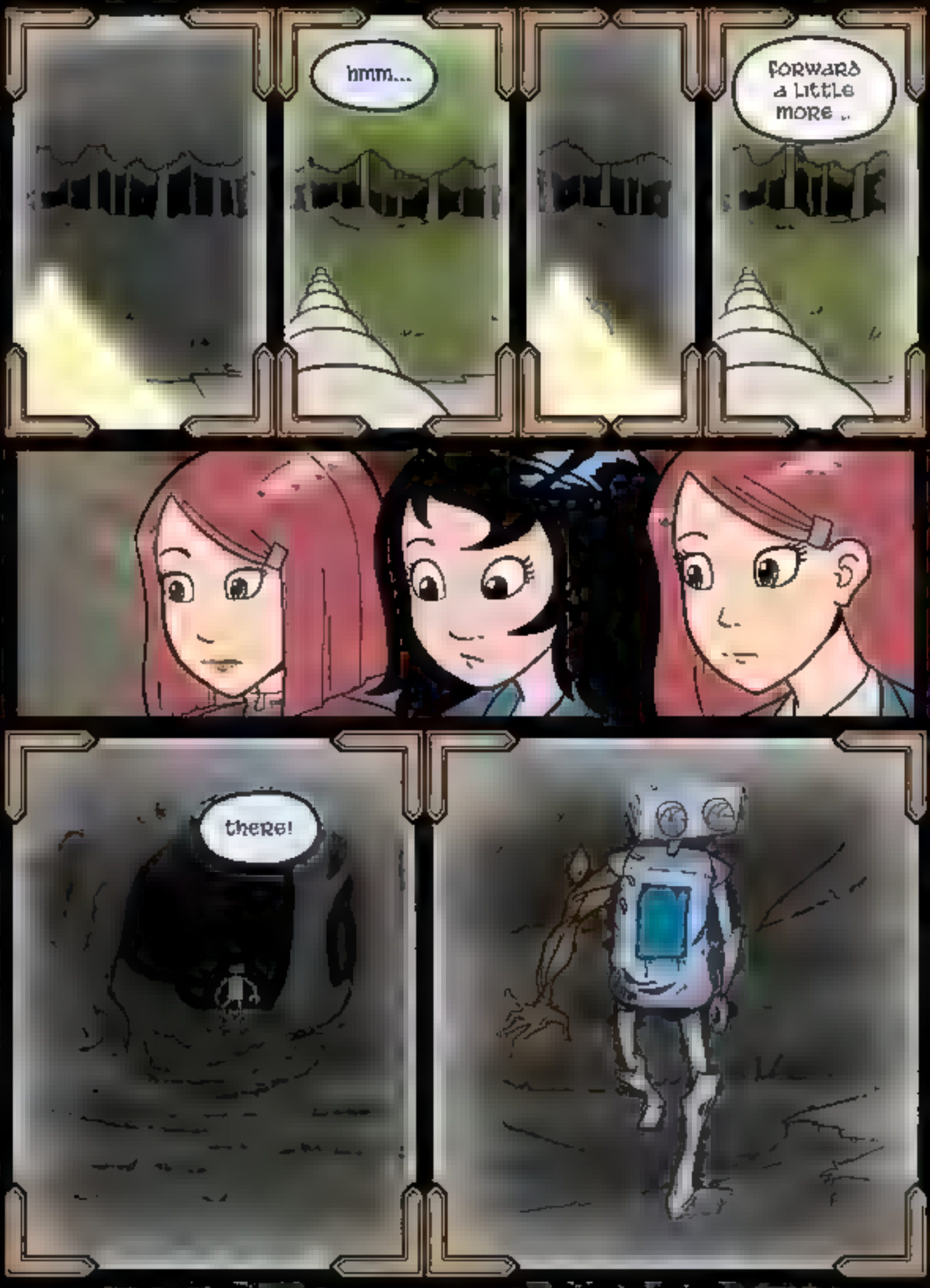
there I am

oops!
zimmy hates your bird, I'm afraid!
right, right I'll move on
yikes.
It keeps getting drawn to her!

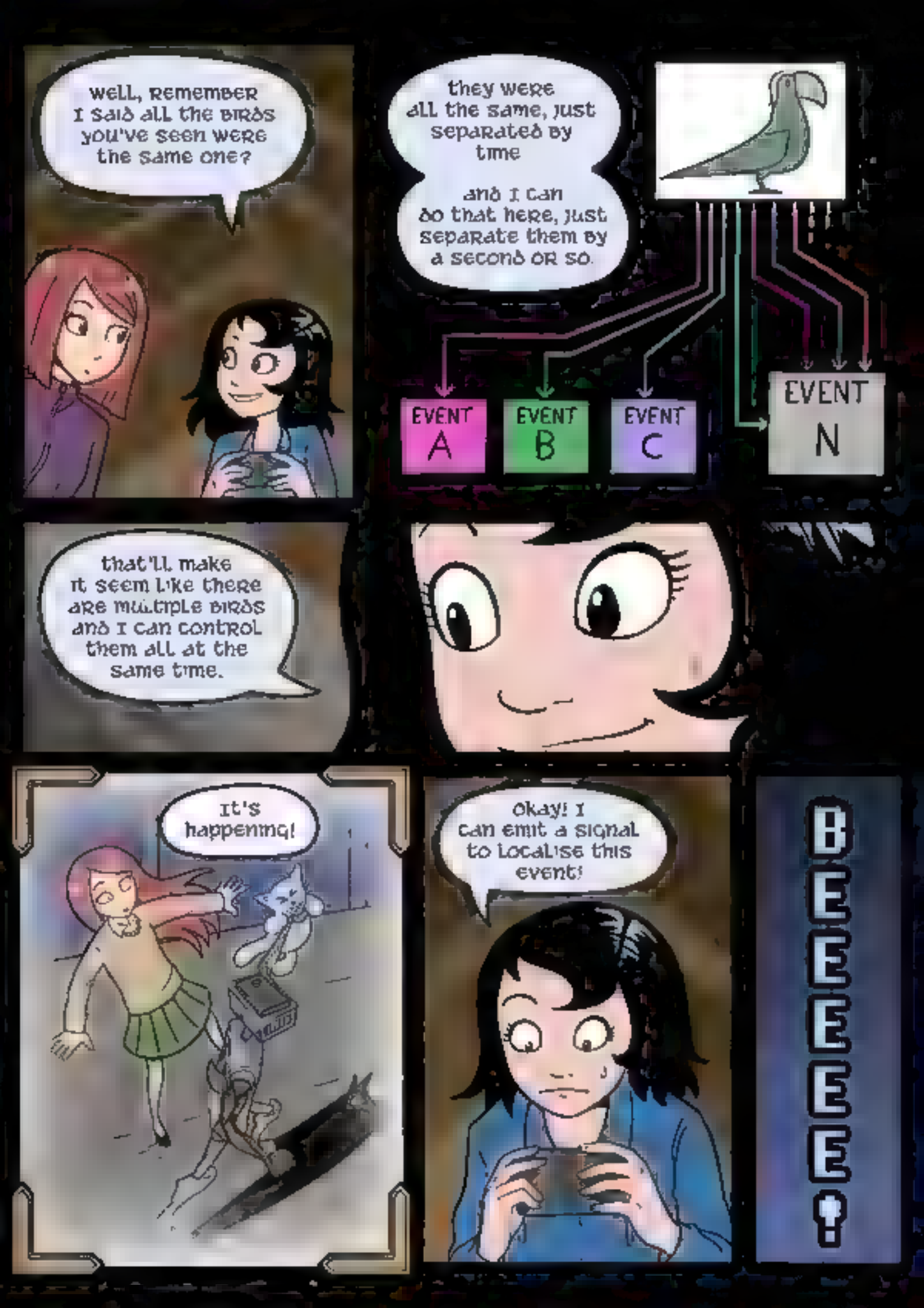
Let me try something.
hmm where's this?
ah! Fly over to the patio by F block, will you?
haha! that's your father and me.
aw! Look at you two!
now fly to the west canals, but be sure to let us follow.
oh right, so you can find your workshop.

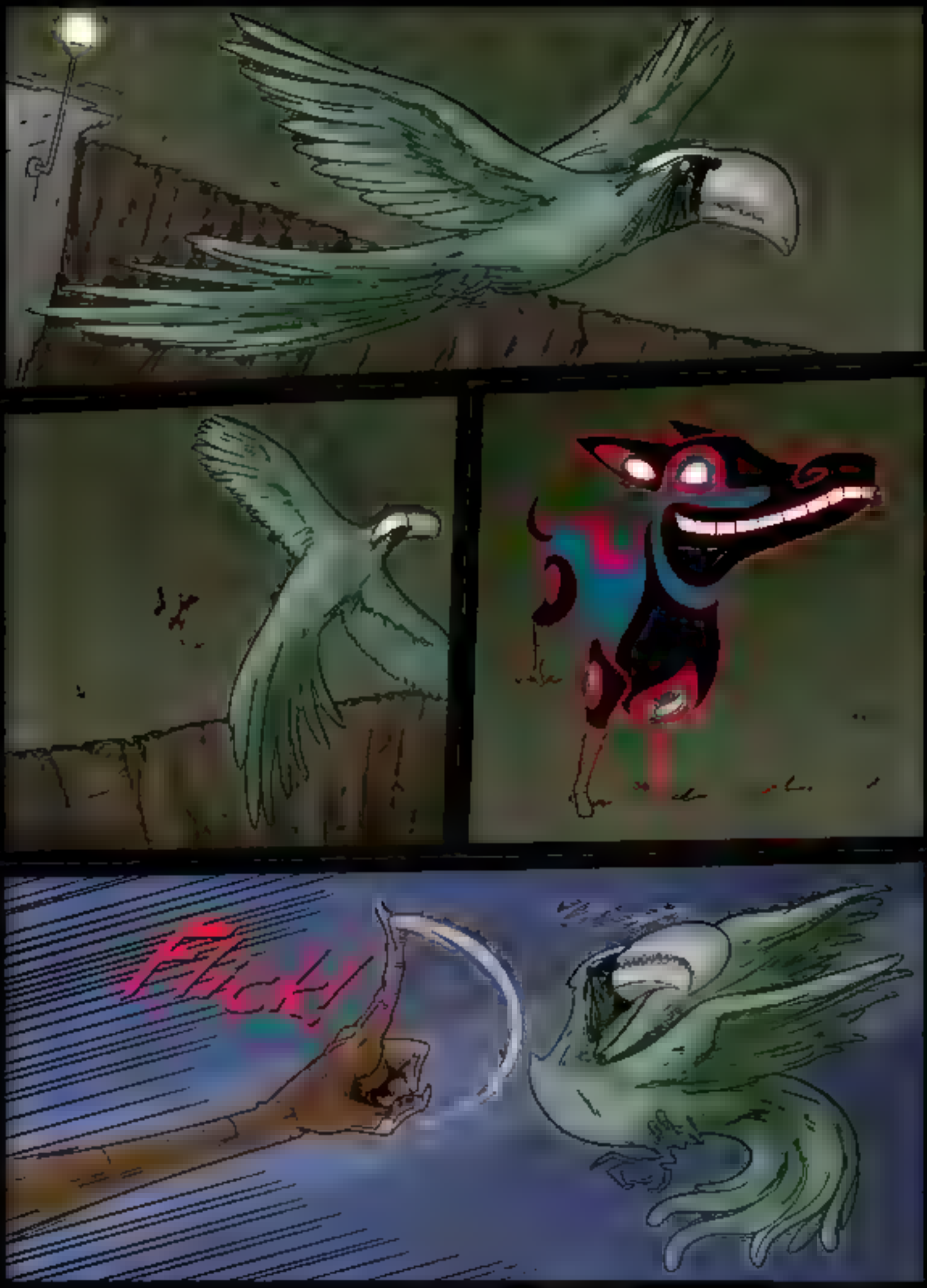
that's the last we saw of the bird.
time to disappear then!
okay, back on track now.
there I am!
this is when I was looking for renard.

oh! here's the bridge
and look
no, this is when robot crossed the bridge for the first time.
this one act of mine essentially started all of this
so, we're in the right place, but the wrong time
I should be able to anchor around this location.


hmm....
forward a little more ..
there!

oh man... I never saw robot like this.
ysengrin planted a seed in him that grew into a new arm.
and look, that shadow man is controlling him somehow.
there you are again, annie!
this is it!
wait! you only have one bird!
when I fell, there were many of them!


well, remember I said all the birds you've seen were the same one?
they were all the same, just separated by time
and I can do that here, just separate them by a second or so.
EVENT A
EVENT B
EVENT C
EVENT N
that'll make it seem like there are multiple birds and I can control them all at the same time.
It's happening!
okay! I can emit a signal to localise this event!
BEEEEE!


FECK!

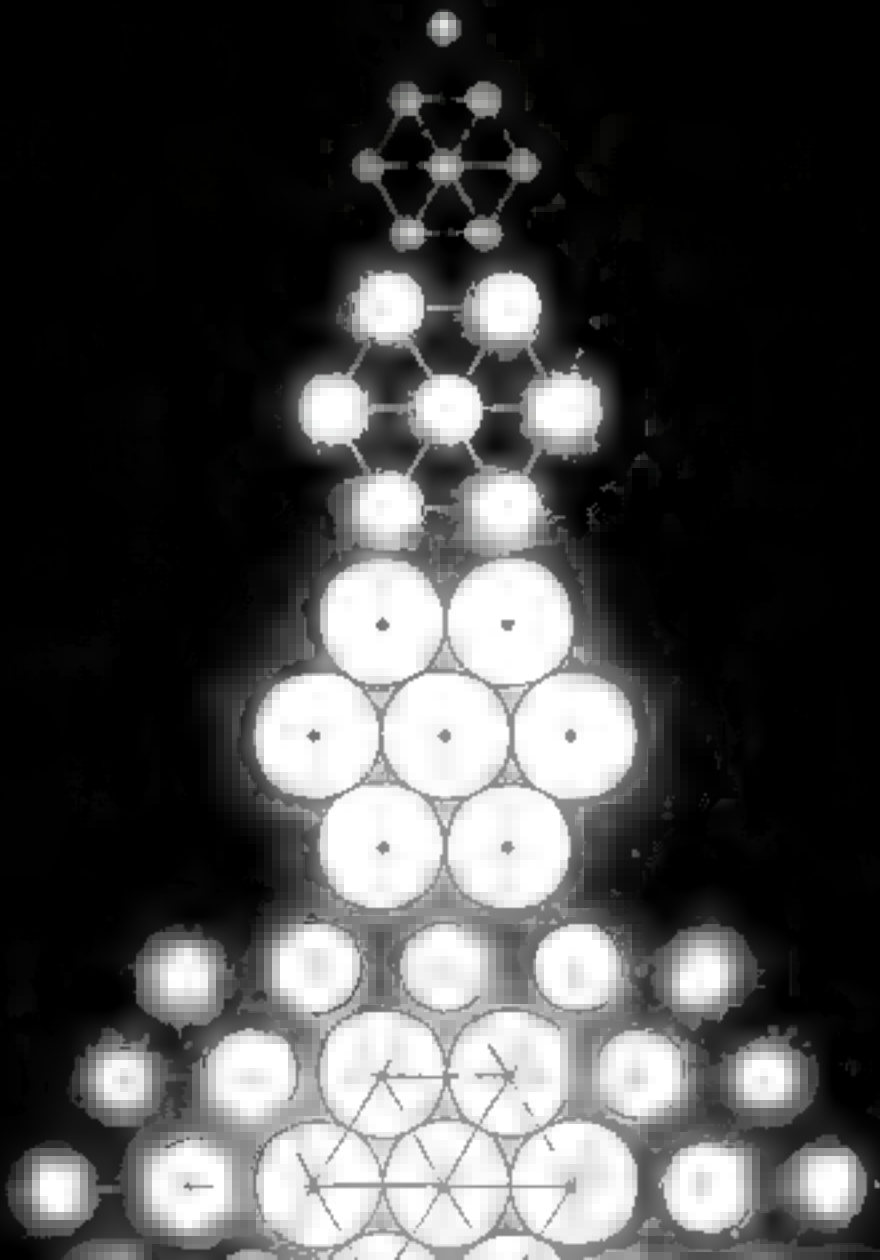
what happened?!
your bird was destroyed.
a higher power than ours, I'm afraid.
so .. that's it?
that's it.
was I able to save annie?
yes

antimony
congratulations
you have a friend willing to move time itself just for you.

Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 78:

Behind It All



hey, there.
kat!

It was getting a little long, right?
It looks wonderful!
hehe!
paz, I'm sorry I've been kinda distant lately
I think you could tell I has a lot of stuff on my mind.
yes...

and I know you thought it had a lot to do with annie.
they told me you... talked to them.
oh, kat... I ~
no, it's okay. I know you were just looking out for me.
and the truth is, the stuff going on with annie was on my mind, in a way.
but. . I was able to help!
you always help them! you help everyone!
haha, jeez, I try to!
but I mean I really saw what I could do for real.

It's going to sound odd, but I kind of saw a version of myself that was a little more put together
a little more sure of herself
and I thought they were really cool, haha!
Who were "they?"
I'll explain, don't worry.
but the problem I was having, I was able to figure it out with their help.
In a way I'd never have been able to do on my own.
and that's fine!
When I realised that, I really was able to help annie and myself too.

I know you and annie are best friends. I hope you don't think I was trying to come between you two...
no, no! see, annie can be a little oblivious
hmm...
be nice!
and sometimes I can be pretty closed off.
but you helped, paz! you nudged her, she nudged me, and things fell into place!
but next time, try not ganging up on her, okay?
oh, kat, I'm so embarrassed! I should not have done it like that!
hehe, she knows you meant well!

but it wasn't just annie's situation that was on my mind.
all this stuff going on with the court and the forest...
and the robots, of course...
I'm even more sure of the work I have to do to help them, but I know I made some bad choices along the way.
and that's something I'm going to have to face up to.
so I'm asking you to put up with me for now...
of course, kat!
I think with you there, things will be okay!

okay, I think I'm ready
good luck!
disguise: no makeup hair tied back
hello, father.
busy working?
yes.

It didn't work! he could tell it was me straight away
w-well, stick to the plan anyway! ask him about his work!
you're...
making spreadsheets?
yes.
um.
It's for weather readings.
oh?!
yes

IS there a lot of weather recently?
It does not seem to alter much.
oh, that's interesting!
hmm
Tic Tic Tic Tic
well, I better go.
Tap
I think I.. something.

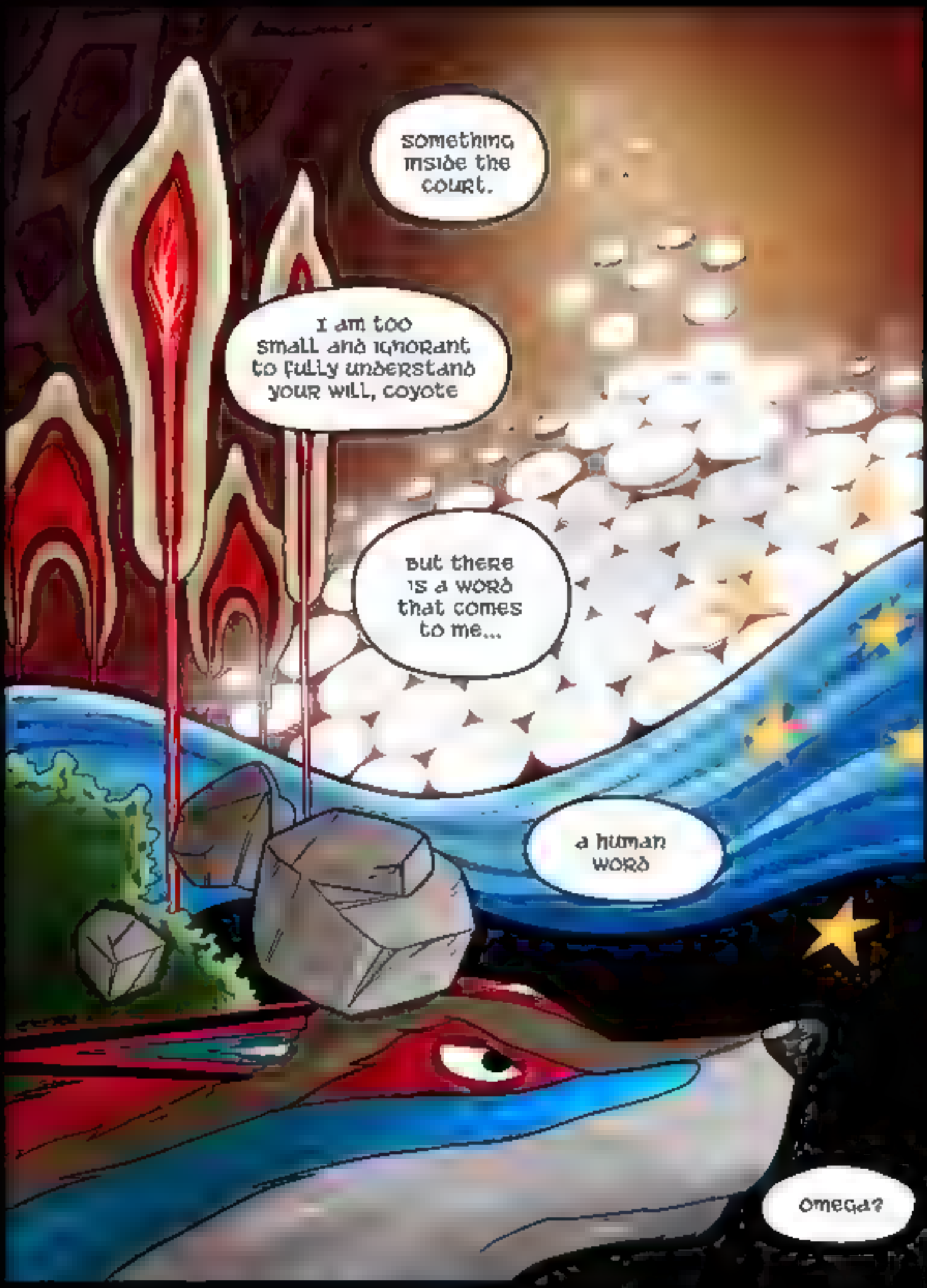
see you later
ah yes.
incredible.
that a man could act in such a way with his own daughter.
renard.

you wouldn't have been able to see it but ,
I think he did try
he tried to talk to me about his work but just... couldn't.
Is that really trying?
It's something
It's a step, I think.
a step on the way to knowing him better.

Guh
Gamma.

Gamma
Gamma.

coyote
I know I am missing a valuable piece, but I think I am starting to understand.
not just your genius, or your power
I see how I was a fool to try and take them from you.
I can sense the terrible end you have planned for me, and why it must be so.
and...
something else...

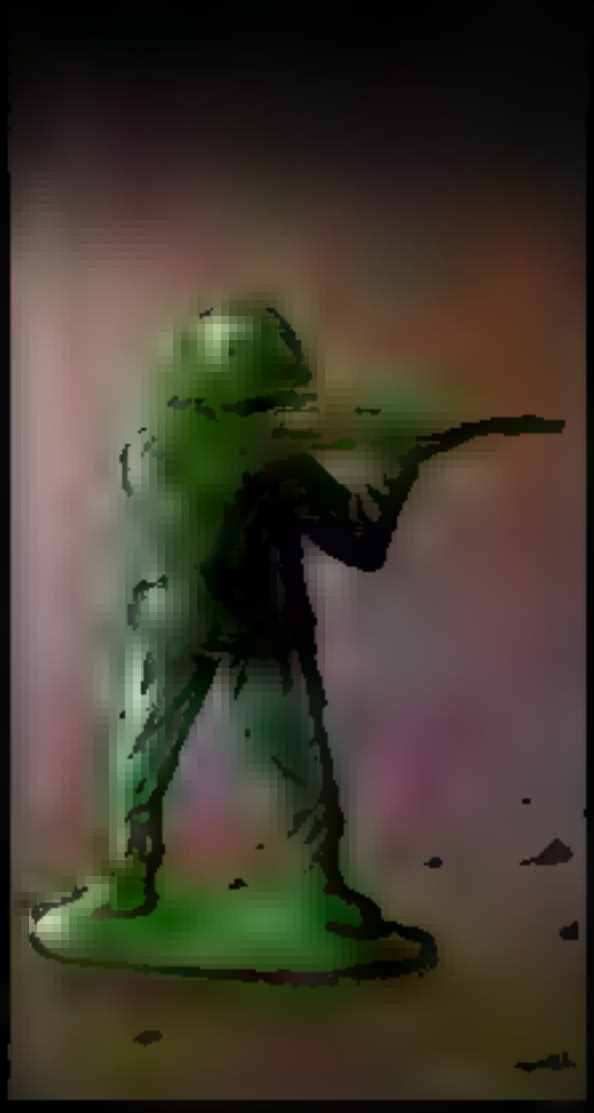

something inside the court.
I am too small and ignorant to fully understand your will, coyote
but there is a word that comes to me...
a human word
omega?

O~
omeçar?

Gunnerkrigg Court

Chapter 79:

Find Yourself



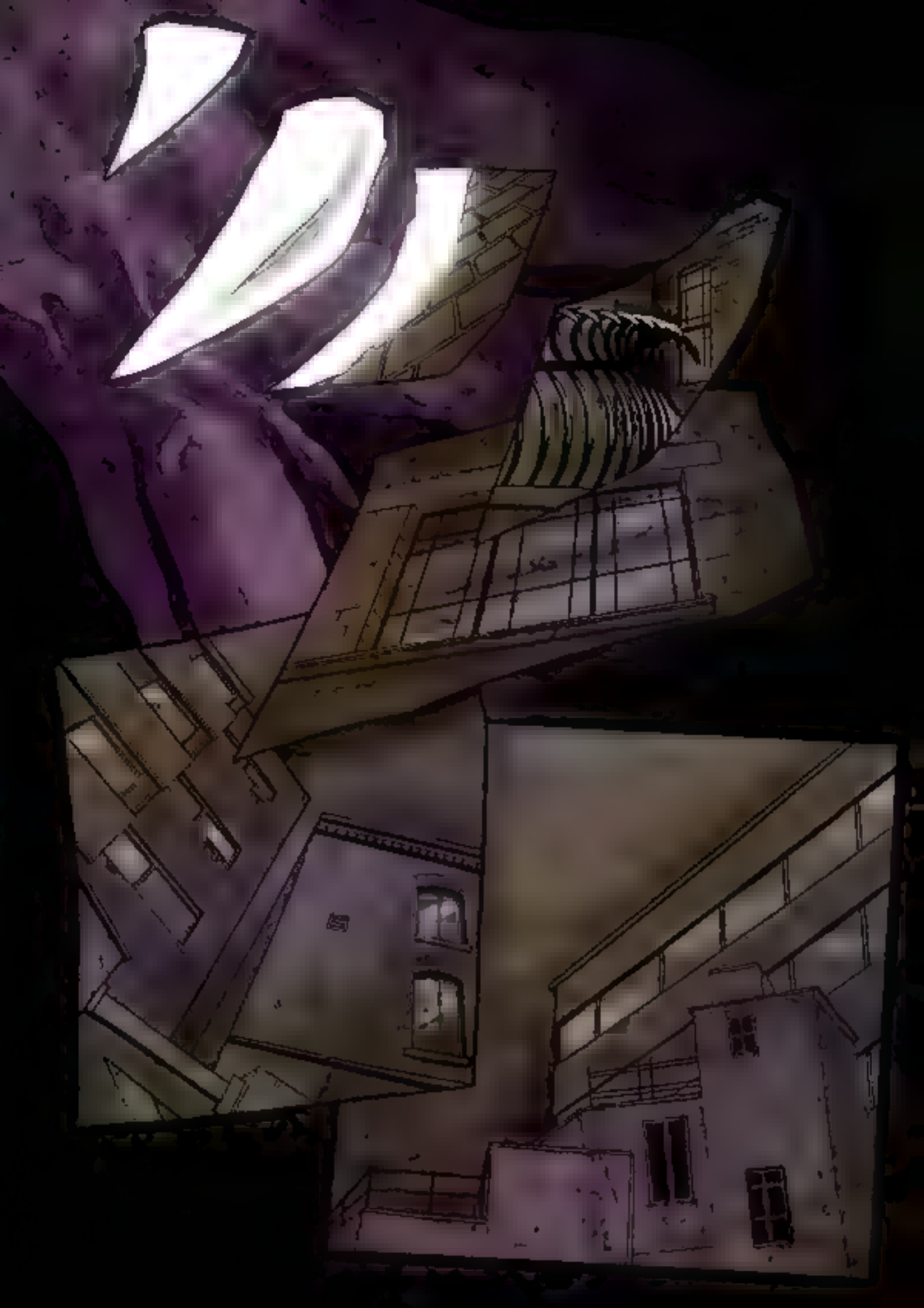
Tap Tap Tap Tap Tap Tap

zimmy!

C-CARVER!
ZIMMY, WHAT'S WRONG?!
THEY'RE COMIN'!
BE CAREFUL! DON'T TOUCH HER!
RENARD, CALM DOWN!
THEY'RE COMIN'!
THERE! THERE!
OVER HERE!

there!
watch out, you! that am't no girl!
that's a demon!
what?!
this is a friend of ours!
no, we seen it!
It's been sneakin' around!

look, you don't understand!
zimmy's just ~
look out!
got ya!
uhh!
no!
don't!
ahhhh!



ugh... this again.
antimony!
renard?
GRR!
Bah! I seem to be stuck like this!

Is this the mind of that blasted demon girl again?
Renard! Don't call her a demon! That's how all this
Oh!
I can't reach you with my mind..
Our connection is severed?
W-well then we better be sure not to get separated.
I'll be sure to protect you!

why are you so scared of this place, renard?
and zimmy herself!
bah! what a question!
you see how that girl's mind distorts reality and the ether alike!
imagine what she could do to a creature like me!
eek!
get back!
those elf kids!
they won't have any idea what's going on!

Get away, you!
It's okay! Just ignore them!
GOP
Come on, this way!
Gourt! What is this devilry?
It's that demon's work, I tell ya!

this is all caused by zimmy, yes, but it's not her fault!
why were you chasing her? she's a very troubled girl!
troubled!
she don't deserve to be alive!
she don't deserve gamma!
kellm! what are you sayin'?!
I .. I dunno why I said that!

things like that might happen in this place.
everything you see here is made by the mind of that girl you were chasing.
It's like a distorted version of the real world.
and those distortions can alter what you think, as well
aye, such as makin' us see a talkin' teddy toy, right?
05
um, hmm, well, in my case
Look, what we have to do is either find Zimmy or Gamma, the girl she was with.
what girl?

didn't you see zimmy with a taller girl?
brown hair?
no, she was on her own.
aye! an' she was all climbin' up the wall like a spider!
excuse me?!
an' she was all yellin' and cryin' and such!
and you started chasing her? didn't she seem to be in trouble?
um ..
we didn't want a demon like that near our home, like...
ugh, never mind. we need to get moving.
wait! where's tam?

Is he that boy that jumped on zimmy?
I suppose we'll have to hope that fool isn't in a worse position than we are
we have to look for a toy shop, I think.
OR a tall tower. zimmy was in one last time we were here.
you do this a lot, court?
no, we try not to harass zimmy, usually
ain't that nice of you, carver.
zimmy?

Zimmy! Can you tell us where you are?
What do you care? you ain't no different from these guys chasin' me!
I thought you were doing well recently
We only spoke a short time ago!
Shut up!
Don't look for me, just find Gamma!
Wha...
Lise! you was talkin' all weird!
Let's go...

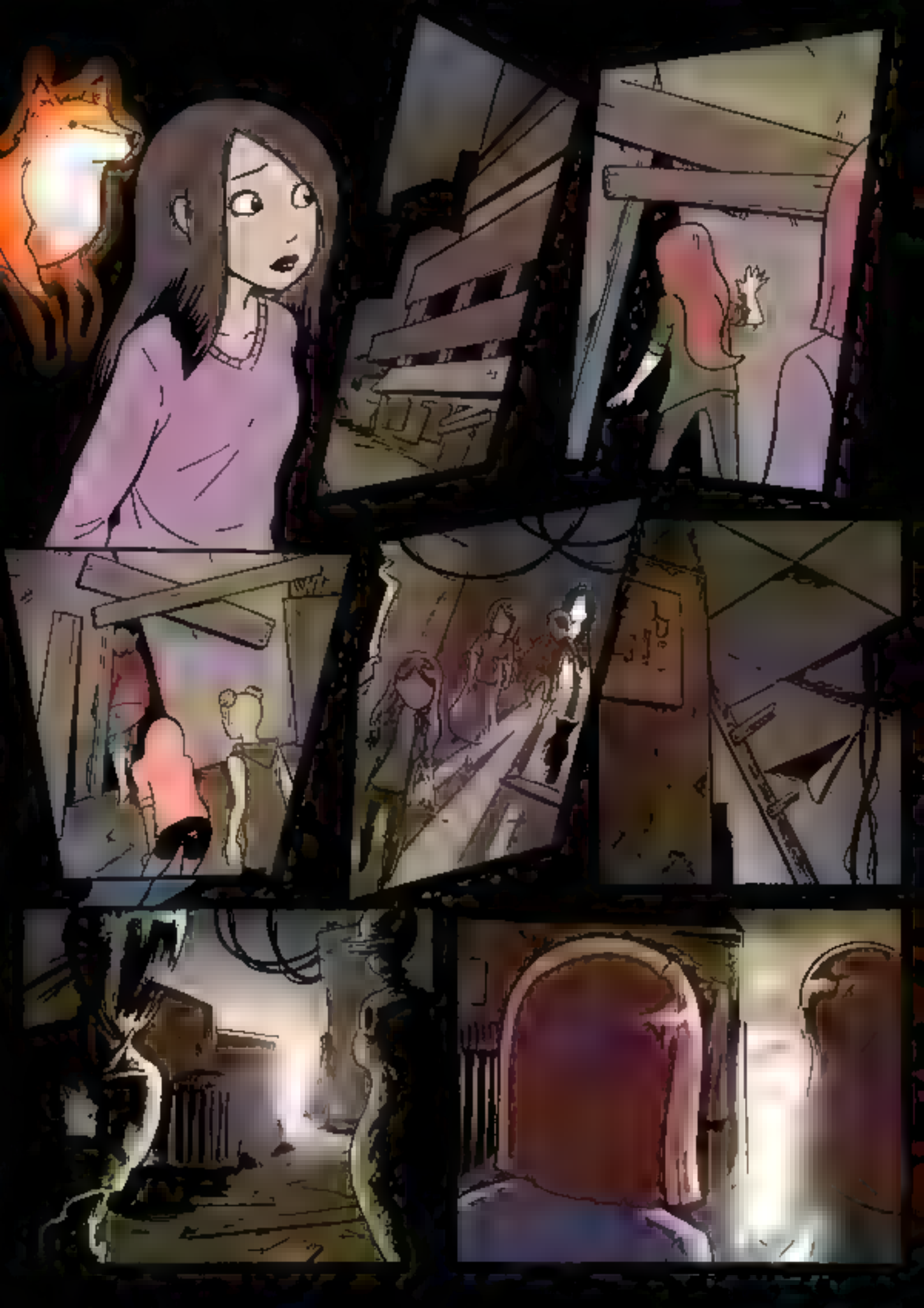
court.
my name isn't "court."
Oh... yeah.
I'm annie.
I'm annie as well.
I'm ROB.
05
05

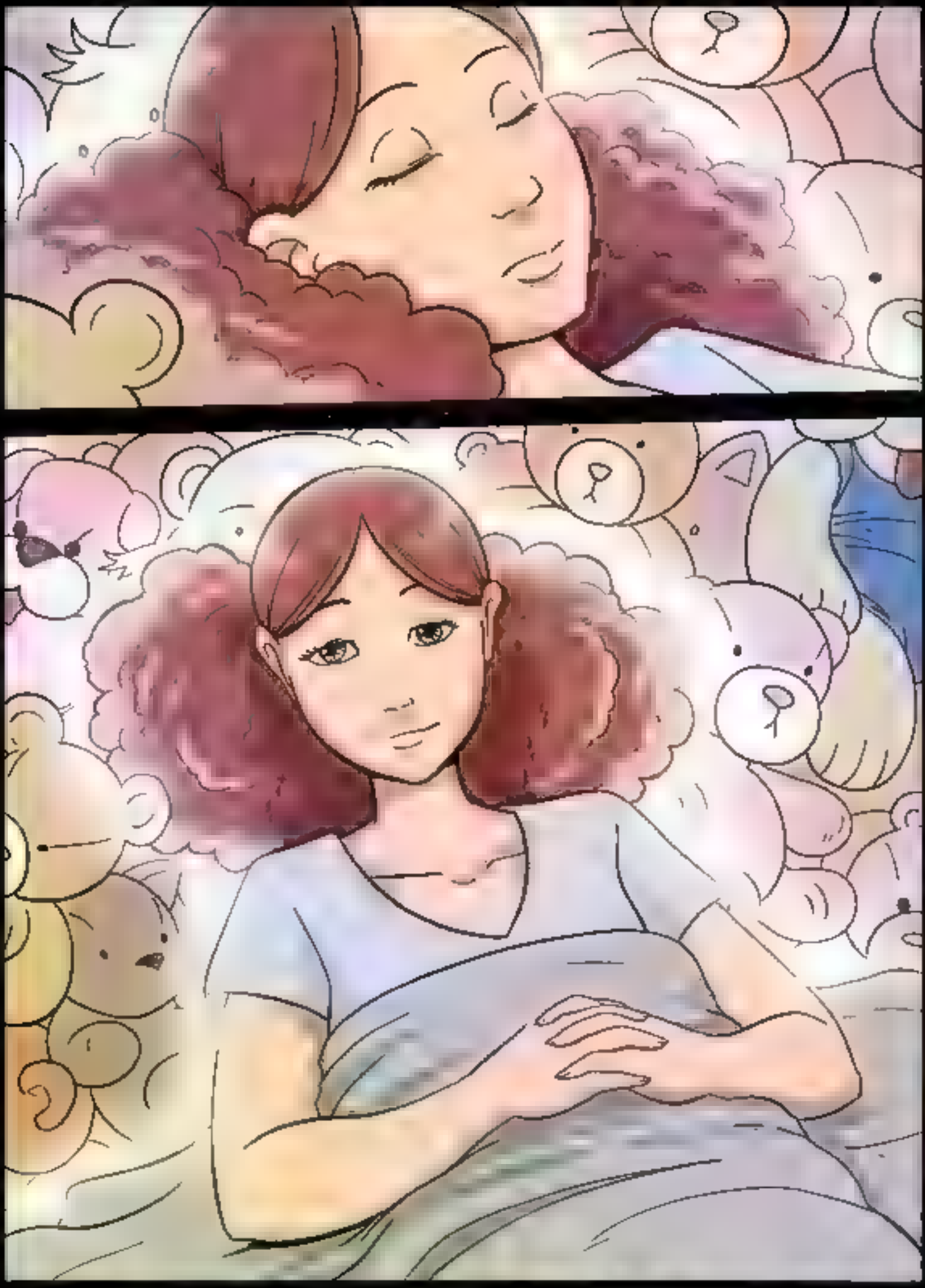
oh, hello, doggie
you!
what is all this?!

zimmy is being dramatic again.
you and antimony were caught up in it.
but... that's me!
how can I be walking around in there and out here with you?
that's not you. It's a part of antimony.
they all are, in a way parts of zimmy too.
she's having a little trouble.

Zimmy's reliving something that happened to her and she pushed me away
this happened before?
yes, before I met her.
some teenagers chased her and beat her up.
but now she s living it again with elements from the court.
she always does this. she's always beating herself up.
why?
because she believes she deserves it.

what can we do?
we can watch for now, and hope antimony figures it out
and we can hope they don't go to the toy store...
there's the toy store!
oh dear...

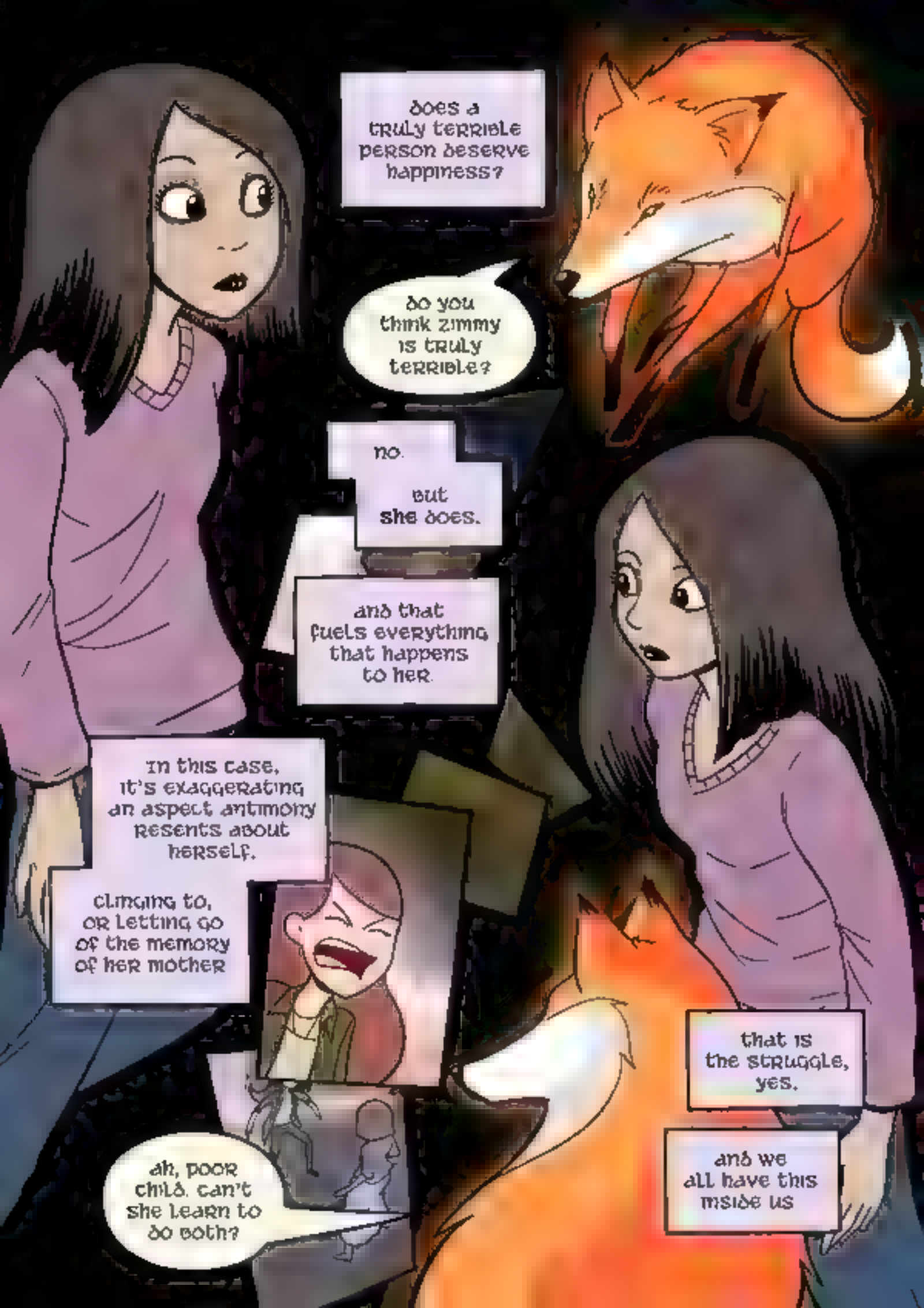




m-mother!
SURMA! SURMA!
no!
GOR
how could you?!
she wasn't real! you know that!
SURMA! my SURMA! oh no!

you didn't have to be so hasty!
you could have just let us look at her!
I don't know!
what use is that?!
you. you let her blind you!
what did you say?!
surma!
m-maybe this is why father is so distant from you!
you remind him too much of her!
at least I do remember her!
I haven't forgotten her like you have!

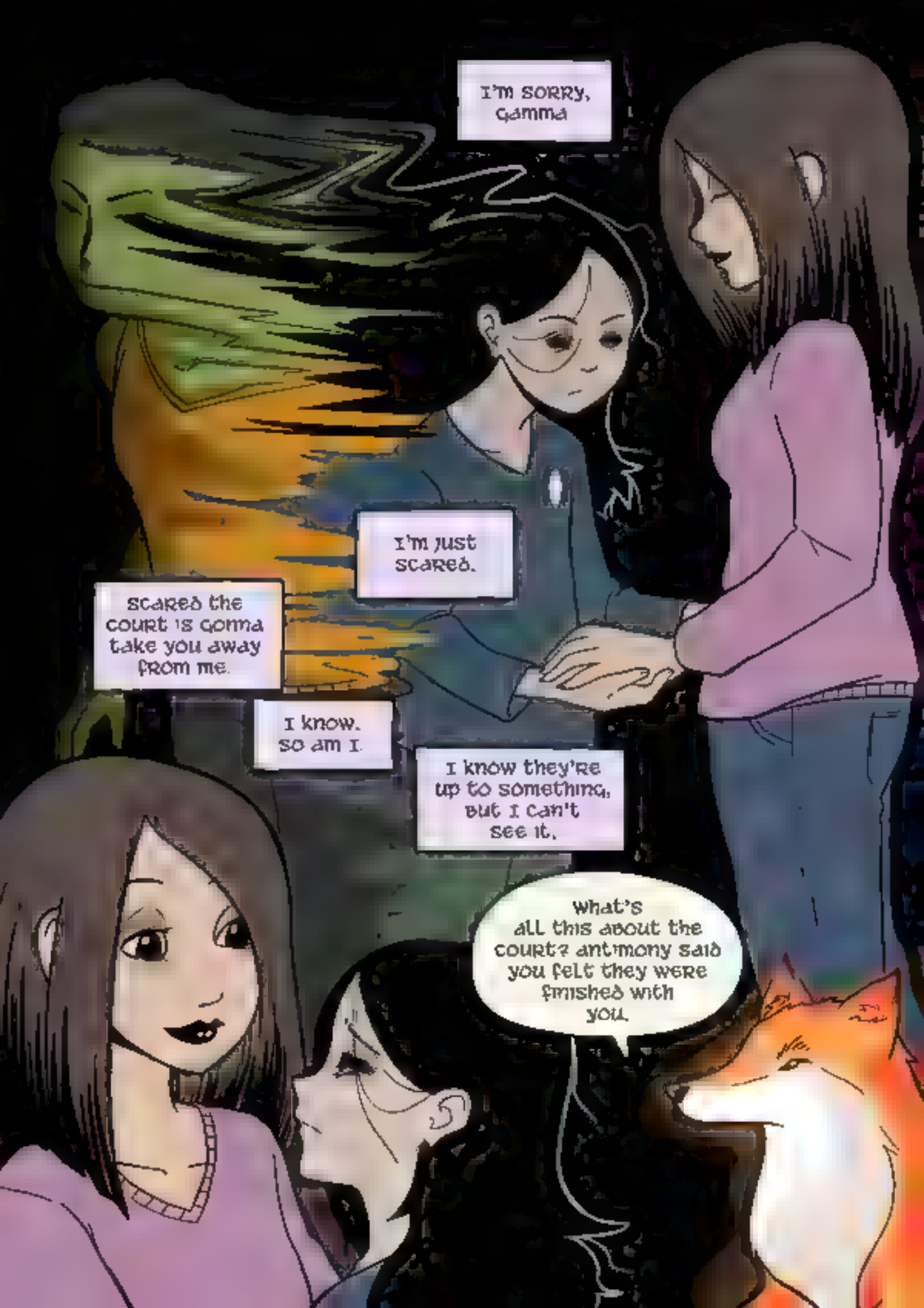
Is this how they think I act?
ah! now they're quarreling!
this is zimmy's influence... turning her hatred at herself.
why does this zimmy hate herself so?
she says she did something terrible a long time ago, before we met
whatever it was, I think it's the reason she's... like she is.
she honestly feels some people, like herself, do not deserve to be happy
a little harsh, isn't it?
but what if it's true?


does a truly terrible person deserve happiness?
do you think zimmy is truly terrible?
no.
but she does.
and that fuels everything that happens to her.
in this case, it's exaggerating an aspect antimony resents about herself.
clinging to, or letting go of the memory of her mother
ah, poor child. can't she learn to do both?
that is the struggle, yes.
and we all have this inside us

zimmy is aware of this m kat, too.
katerina? what of her?
she was set to travel a dark road ..
but antimony's presence helped put her on a better path.
in turn, kat will help lead the court itself in a better direction
sadly, that negative potential will always exist in kat, and this terrifies zimmy.
what's all this then?

this is pretty strange, yeah?
Is that... Rob? an' Kellm an' Lise...
whats -
dammit, Rob. we all know you fancy Kellm but Look what you did.
you ain't gonna make her feel safe in the court showin' off like this.
I dunno... maybe she likes it?
What's happening?
sometimes Zimmy and I get a little peek into someone's mind like this

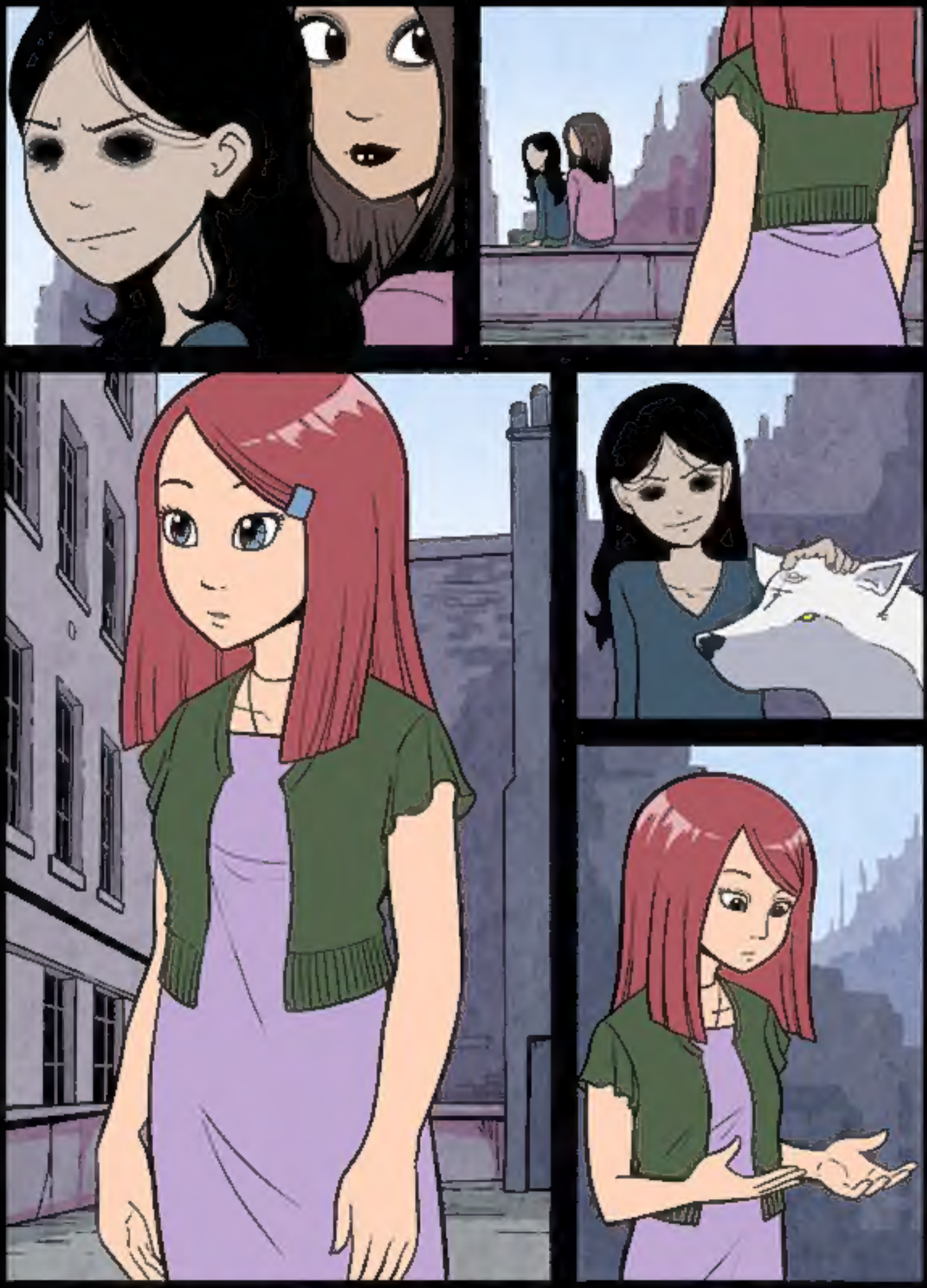
I thought these weren't real people
Oh, it's a little complicated..
hoo-ee, Lise is lookin' good though
does she know I like her?
Is it weird she's Rob's sister?
that's not bad, right? but he is my boy
Is this all he's thinking about? just childish concerns!
hehe! well, people have their priorities ..
things we think about above other things.
or things we worry about
Isn't that right, Zimmy?

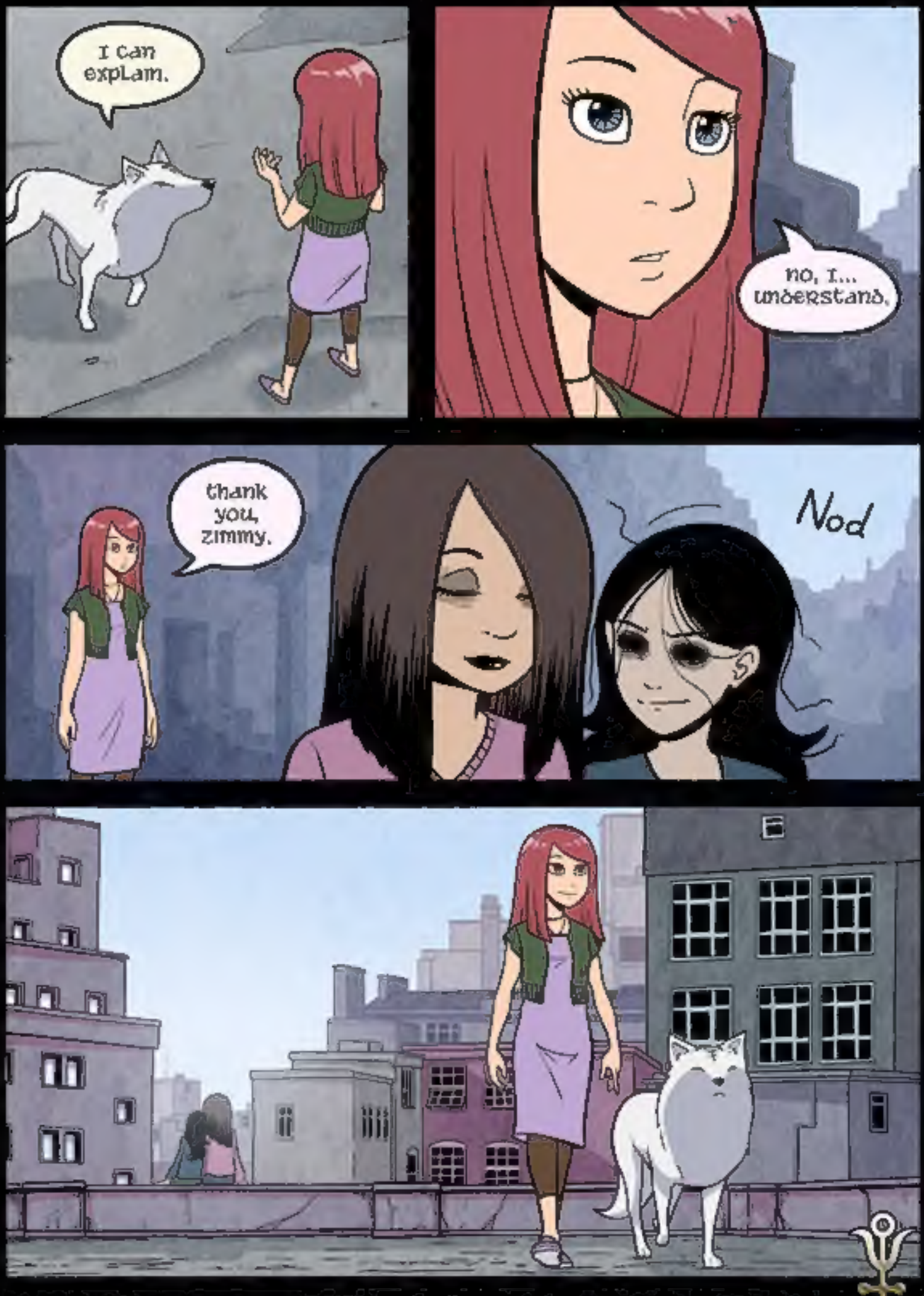

I'm sorry, Gamma
I'm just scared.
Scared the court is gonna take you away from me.
I know. So am I.
I know they're up to something, but I can't see it.
What's all this about the court? Antimony said you felt they were finished with you.

we thought so too, yeah.
but now they made some kinda machine
no, not a machine .. it's like... a way of looking into the unseen world.
Is that what you call the ether?
I don't understand.
us neither, but I know it's got something to do with me and Gamma.
and that guy in the forest noticed it too.
Loup? you can sense him?

yeah, he's really focused on what the court's doing.
but I just want them to leave me and Gamma alone!
I was always intimidated by you, Zimmy, but I had no idea you lived like this.
you're lucky to have such an astute partner in Gamma here
hands off, man! she's mine!
you know Antimony considers you both good friends. they would help you in any way they can.
and... so would I.

thanks, foxy.
and I know something that will help carver understand herself a little better.
oh?
It was nice talking with you, doggie
ah... both of you... this has been most interesting.




I can explain.
no, I... understand.
thank you, zimmy.
Nod